

How to Train your Wolf

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Summary: Wolves have been drastically reducing the deer population in the small town Berk. During one of the annual wolf cullings, Hiccup rescues a wolf from a trap. Will he be able to prove the innocence of these amazing creatures before its too late? Modern AU where toothless is a wolf instead of a dragon. How to train your dragon belongs to Dreamworks

1. Chapter 1: Chances

Chapter 1:

He heard the beep of a bus' horn and the sound of it pulling away before he was even fully awake.

Hiccup's eyes shot open in panic. He'd overslept. Again. He'd stayed up until early in the morning trying to finish his latest project: a remote controlled flying toy. However, like with nearly all of his other projects, he'd overlooked a slight issue: how to get it to stop. He ended up having to smash it with a book, and its parts were now scattered across his room. Hiccup groaned at the thought of all of his hard work in ruins, and rose slowly from his bed. There was no use hurrying now, he'd already missed the bus. He made his way across his room to the bathroom, stepping carefully over the ruins of his most recent creation, giving a sigh of remorse as he did so.

After pulling on his jacket over his green shirt, he made his way out of the house, rushing to find his bike in the hope of getting to school for second period. Although he disliked the idea of what awaited him at school, the prospect of listening to the "poor attendance" lecture Stoick would give him daunted him even more. Stoick Haddock: Mayor of the small town Berk and, ah yes, Hiccup's father in his spare time. It wasn't so much that Hiccup disliked his father, more the fact that they never seemed able to agree on anything. This often resulted in awkward conversations and avoiding each other's eyes. But there was one thing they could both agree on:

the wolves had to go. The wolves, who'd brutally murdered his mother. The wolves were killing all the deer in the area, leaving a tiny population, far too small for the people of Berk to hunt for furs. The wolves were the sole thing Hiccup hated more than school. 13 years ago, Hiccup's mother went for a hike in the woods near their house, and was never seen again. Hiccup was left without a mother at just three years old, too young to remember the caring touch of her hand or her gentle voice. He just wished he could remember her, that he could've spent just a bit longer with her, that the wolves hadn't stolen her from him. Stoick had been devastated at the loss of his wife, and a home that was once full of laughter now rarely saw even a smile. Those wolves had ruined his life, Hiccup thought bitterly as he pedalled to school.

He made it just in time. He snuck into school as if he'd been there all morning, losing himself in a crowd of teens on the way to their next lesson. If anyone asked where he'd been he'd just say-

"- I wasn't feeling well so I was stuck in the toilets all of first period, but I'm better now!" Hiccup found himself lying to Fishlegs.

"It's not contagious is it?" Fishlegs asked, worry evident in his voice as he shuffled further away from Hiccup, failing miserably at his attempts of subtlety. Fishlegs was the only one who was willing to acknowledge Hiccup without making fun of him, and so Hiccup gladly ignored his friend's faults.

"No, I don't think so" chuckled Hiccup, before turning his attention back to the lesson. Economics. One of his least favourite subjects, particularly due to the seating arrangement which left him in front of Snotlout and Tuffnut, two of the schools worst bullies. They seemed to have made it their life's ambition to make Hiccup's time at school a living hell, and so far they were doing a very good job.

"Aw, was little Useless feeling a bit sickie-wicky?" Snotlout sang, using his favourite name for Hiccup and earning a large laugh from Tuffnut, who promptly gave Snotlout a high five.

"Just ignore them!" muttered Fishlegs, but Hiccup had already blocked them out, a trick which he'd become quite adept at over the years of constant taunts. He bit back the urge to make a smart remark, but knew it would be wasted on Snotlout who wouldn't understand, and then would just tease Hiccup even more. Instead, he turned his attention back to his notebook, in which he was doodling random images. You'd expect the teacher to tell him off, but she never did. Hiccup suspected that she just didn't notice him, much like the rest of his schoolmates. That's how it worked for Hiccup: he either was picked on or ignored, with Fishlegs being his only friend. Hiccup was used to it, but he secretly longed to be accepted, to have people actually care about what he had to say. Why can't I just be normal? He thought miserably.

His mind wandered to the previous night's project. Maybe if I adjusted the calibration Hiccup mused, determined to fix the plane. He hated it when his ideas went wrong, which they usually did. Just another thing that makes me useless, he thought bitterly, nothing I do is ever right. Gods knew Snotlout reminded him of it often enough. He sighed, wishing that for once something could go

right in his life, a prospect which seemed as radical as the stories most children were told when they were little. But not Hiccup. No, Hiccup had to read them himself, what with his dad being so busy. He remembered when he read the one about the trolls and was so scared he couldn't sleep, and when six year old Hiccup went to his father for reassurances, he was told to "stop being such a baby and man up". Needless to say, Hiccup never again went to his father with his problems, instead attempting to solve them himself, which led to his interest in creating things. He wanted to be able to create a way out of his problems, to get away from a life where he was useless. But most of all, he just wanted his dad to say "well done" or "you did great", instead of the constant awkwardness between them. The only proper conversations he'd had with Stoick were when things had gone wrong, or when Hiccup embarrassed him in front of the whole town. He just wished one day he could wake up and have a normal relationship with his dad, but doubted that could ever happen. _Welcome to my life,_ he thought cynically.

Hiccup had made it through the day with no major incidences and, as he expected, no one had really noticed him not being in the first lesson. He put up with several more taunts from Snotlout and Tuffnut, just keeping his head down and getting on with his work. At lunch, Hiccup and Fishlegs sat at their usual table in the corner at the back of the room, away from the table where Hiccup's aggravators sat.

"What's wrong?" Fishlegs asked, after noticing Hiccup put his straw in the juice carton angrily.

"Just dad as usual" Hiccup sighed, and Fishlegs prepared himself for one of Hiccup's ranting sessions. As Fishlegs was the only person other than Gobber that the teen could speak openly to, he was subjected to quite a few of these.

"What did he do this time?" Fishlegs asked wearily.

"It's not what he does, its just how he always has this disappointed scowl on his face, like someone's skimped on the meat on his sandwich" Hiccup took a deep breath before imitating Stoick's strong Scottish accent, waving his juice carton in the air as he did so. "Excuse me, barmaid? I'm afraid you've brought me the wrong offspring. I ordered an extra large boy with beefy arms, extra guts and glory on the side. This here, this is a talking Fishbone!" he exclaimed.

"You know, I actually think its not so much what you look like but what's inside that he cant stand" Fishlegs stated, thinking he was being helpful, but only making things worse.

"Thank you, Fishlegs, for summing that up." Hiccup said dryly. "I just wish he'd listen to me without looking so disappointed"

"You need to stop trying so hard to be something you're not," Fishlegs pointed out.

"I just want him to accept me" came the reply, before Hiccup picked up his tray. "See you next lesson," he said, walking away to wallow in his misery. Fishlegs sighed, concerned, as he watched his friend leave.

When the final bell rang, Hiccup waited around in the library for half an hour to avoid the crush of students trying to cram through the school gates to freedom, a crush which would be lethal to someone as small as himself. This had become routine to Hiccup, knowing that an attempt to leave earlier would probably lead to several injuries. Again, he wished he could be normal, that he didn't have to worry about silly things like that. Gobber kept promising that he'd get his growth spurt soon, but Hiccup wasn't so sure. Maybe I'm just destined to be a scrawny runt for the rest of my life, he thought. No one ever realised he was the son of the chief, and when they did it was for all the wrong reasons. Hiccup had the same auburn hair as his father, but that was where the similarities ended. Where his father was really wide, Hiccup was in contrast skinny. Hiccup had piercing green eyes whilst Stoick had pale green eyes. Even their personalities were completely different; Stoick radiated confidence whilst Hiccup was an awkward and shy teen. After leafing through some random books for a while, he deemed it safe enough to leave school. He grabbed his bike and slowly pedalled home. When Hiccup got there, he trudged his way upstairs, and collapsed on his bed, determined to catch up on his lost sleep. He'd probably be alone all night again, as his father always got home late and left early, going to the town hall and often doing work on his campaign for another wolf culling. So far, it seemed most of Berk would vote in his favour, with the vote planned to take place in two days time, and then the culling itself two days later, if everything went to plan. The thought comforted Hiccup, who was looking forward to there being less of his mother's murderers in the area. He also hoped it would get him noticed. Killing a wolf might even get him a _girlfriend! _It was this thought that shook all ideas of sleep out of Hiccup's mind, as he got started on a new project.

3 days laterâ€¦

Stoick had won the vote, the culling would happen tomorrow. Traps were being set, and guns were being distributed and now there was just one thing left for Hiccup to do.

"Dad, I need to speak to you about something."

Stoick looked up, surprised. It was rare for them to share a meal together, let alone speak over it. He pushed this thought aside quickly though.

"What is it?" he asked warily.

Hiccup took a deep breath. "I want to come on the hunt tomorrow. Now, I know what you're gonna sayâ€¦" he said quickly when his dad looked ready to interrupt, " that I'm too small, that I'll get hurt and so on, but I think it will be really good for me. You know, I just see a wolf, and I have to kill it. It's who I am dadâ€¦" he finished flatly.

Stoick sighed. "You're many things Hiccup, but a wolf hunter isn't one of them."

"Please dad," Hiccup pleaded, "I need to do this. For mum."

Stoick's face softened slightly. That was the very same reason he did what he did. In that sense, he could relate with his son. It's funny, he thought, even though Val wasn't there, she still managed to bring

the two together. _Oh Valâ€|_

"Ok, I'll give you a chance. One chance mind, so see that you don't mess up." The joy that was spreading on Hiccup's face faded a bit at that last stinging remark, reminding him that even his dad thought that he was a failure. But he was determined to do something about that.

Before either of them had the chance to say anything else, there was a knock at the door.

"That'll be Gobber," Stoick said, as he rose to open the door. A few minutes later he reappeared with Gobber in tow.

Hiccup grinned. Gobber was like an uncle, or the father Hiccup wished he had, always cheering him up. No doubt he'd come to help Stoick with the final bits of organising for the cull.

"Hey Hiccup, how ya doing?" Gobber asked warmly.

"Good thanks, been working on a new project, want to see it?" He asked, relishing the chance to share his creation with someone.

"Sure, lead on," Gobber said, then following Hiccup up the stairs.

"I call it 'The Mangler'," Hiccup revealed proudly, gesturing to the strange contraption on the worktop when they reached his room.

"Ahâ€|it's great, it's, it'sâ€| what is it?" Gobber asked cautiously, looking at it carefully. It had large jaws full of sharp teeth, and some sort of spring action.

"It's a wolf trap," Hiccup stated, as if it was entirely obvious, "for the hunt tomorrow."

"So what, you gonna give it to your dad? I'm not sure he'd be able to set it upâ€|"

"No, I'm going to be there; I'll set it up."

"What? You can't come on the hunt!" Gobber exclaimed.

"Why not? Dad said I can!" Hiccup replied sharply.

"You can't use a gun, you can't throw a weighted net; how exactly will you bring down a 60kg wolf?" Gobber felt he had won this argument. After all, he was only trying to protect the boy. Surely he could see that?

"That may be," Hiccup agreed grudgingly, as a flash of triumph appeared on Gobber's face, so he quickly added " but this will bring one down for me. The steel jaws will clamp around it's leg so it can't move, then I just have to finish it off. It's quite a well known design for a trap actually."

Gobber sighed. He had well and truly lost this one, despite his earlier assumptions. "Just try not to get hurt, ok?" he questioned,

searching the boy's green eyes.

"I won't, nothing will happen to me." Hiccup said reassuringly. With a nod, Gobber took off down the stairs, to start going over things with Stoick.

"I can't believe you're letting him come on the hunt tomorrow!" Gobber started.

"It'll be good for him. He needs to get out of his room and start making something of himself. Don't think I haven't noticed that he has barely any friends. Maybe this'll get him some," grumbled Stoick.

"But the question is: will he be safe?"

Stoick sighed, "Gods, I hope so, I really do!"

Gobber left it at that, knowing not to press Stoick anymore about it.

"Right, so about the traps!"

2. Chapter 2: The Cove

A/N: Thanks so much for all the follows, favourites and reviews, it really made my day to read them all :) I hope you enjoy this chapter, please leave reviews, I'd love to know what you think so far or how I could improve, I love reading them :) also I'm sorry I took so long to update, it was my first week back at school so I was very busy, but I'm hoping to soon update every few days. Anyway, Enjoy!

Chapter 2: The cove

This was it: the day Hiccup had been waiting for. _I can finally get revenge,_ he thought gleefully, pulling himself up out of bed. He went over his trap again, checking that, unlike so many of his other inventions, it wouldn't hideously backfire. After getting dressed, he snuck a hunting knife into his boot. An extra precaution, he thought grimly. Taking a deep breath, he marched down the stairs to where his father was waiting.

Both father and son climbed into the jeep, Hiccup's trap safely hidden in the confines of his rucksack. He found that no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't stop tapping his hands on his knees in nervous anticipation of the day ahead.

"Ready?" Stoick asked, noticing his son's movements.

"Ready." Confirmed Hiccup, with a slight nod.

"There's still time to back out!" Stoick started hopefully, only to be interrupted by Hiccup.

"No. I have to do this. Besides, what's the worst that could happen?"

â€¦..

So said the person who always found a way to mess up. As it happened, within just an hour of the hunt beginning, Hiccup was utterly lost. Everything had been going fine; Hiccup had set his trap, been given a gun along with some hearty pats on the back from the other men, who seemed happy that Stoick's boy had grown some backbone. All the men seemed completely at ease, until a wolf was sighted, that is. Within seconds everyone was chasing it- everyone except Hiccup. He'd been leaning over, re-tying his shoe laces for the fifth time, and after a large outbreak of noise, he looked up to find everyoneâ€¦ gone. He spun on the spot, but couldn't see a sign of anyone. Fear instantly sparked in his chest as his heart gave a slight flutter, before he steeled his nerves and grit his teeth. Clutching his gun close to his chest, he decided to head towards his trap, and set off at a brisk march, determined to prove to his father that he could look after himself. For once, instead of being a hiccup, a mistake, he would make his father proud. It was this thought that made him keep going.

As he walked, he noticed an eerie silence settle over the dark forest. He could hear the trees nearby creaking in the wind, creating a sense of foreboding. All of a sudden a loud crack and a whimper cut through the silence. Hiccup froze. It must have been a trap, he thought, this could be my chance! If I kill a wolf my life would get infinitely better- I might even get a girlfriend! He mused, filling with excited energy. His mind set, he headed towards the sound, abandoning his original plan to head towards his own trap.

The whimpers and growls grew louder, a clear sign that he was getting closer to the trapped animal. Hiccup came to a wall of rocks, blocking his way.

"How am I meant to get through now?" he groaned, but then something caught his eye. A gap! It would be too small for most people to get through, but Hiccup was a lot smaller than most people. It was the first time in his life that he was actually grateful for his small stature. He edged his way through, squeezing his shoulders through first, and what he saw made him nearly forget to pull himself all the way through. It was a clearing, but not like any he'd ever seen before. A stream of water was falling through rocks and logs, creating a beautiful waterfall. Water pooled at the base, and then carried on down a stream which cut through the glade, glistening like crystals in the sun. Wild flowers spotted the clearing, with massive oaks encircling it, making the glade feel private and closed in. But what stood out the most were the roots of an ancient oak tree that draped down the side of the cliff. How someone had managed to get in and set a trap, he'd never know. But there it was, in the middle of the clearing, and there was the wolf. It was jet black, with not a single patch of white in its fur. The wolf wasn't massive, but it looked lean and agile. As hard as it was for Hiccup to admit it, the wolf was a stunning creature. But it's legâ€¦ he'd never seen such a horrible injury before. It looked like the wolf had started to try to chew his leg out of it. Hiccup felt sick to his stomach at the sight of an animal so desperate that it had resulted to harming itself.

He bit down his nerves as he approached the wolf, raising his gun to its chest, lining up the shot and bracing himself in anticipation of the kick of the gun. As he went to pull the trigger, he caught sight of the wolf's piercing emerald eyes andâ€¦ lowered the gun. His mind

screamed at him to pull the trigger, kill the creature that murdered his mother, but he couldn't. All he could do was pity the magnificent creature which had been brought to such a state, all because of one of his father's traps. It wasn't this wolf that killed his mother, so why should it suffer? Before he could convince himself he was being stupid, he crouched down to disable the trap, his hands trembling. As he did so, the wolf's eyes shot open, before whimpering at the pain from his ankle. He had tried growling at the strange human to _stay away! _But Hiccup paid it no attention, despite the fear that growl had struck into him. The trap was almost loose.

"C'mon, C'mon!" Hiccup muttered, as his fingers shook, making his task even more difficult, and then- it was free. The trap had been disabled! He couldn't revel in his accomplishment for long though, as the wolf had realised its leg was free. It leapt at Hiccup, its front paws on his shoulders, pushing him against the ground. Hiccup's heart beat at a thousand miles an hour. _I'm an idiot!_ He thought, _of_ _course it would kill me; I can't believe I thought it wouldn't!_ He closed his eyes, preparing himself for the killing bite-but it never came. Hiccup slowly opened one eye, trying to find out why. Why hadn't the wolf killed him? All it was doing was staring at him with its striking green eyes, and he gradually met its gaze, only for it to release a massive growl. It sounded like it had come from a lion rather than a wolf! Then the weight was gone as suddenly as it had appeared, as the wolf limped away as fast as it could, and it collapsed on the other side of the stream under the shade of the ancient oak. It slowly licked the horrendous gash around its left foreleg.

Hiccup slowly pushed himself up on his elbows, willing his heart beat to slow down. He couldn't believe it had let him go. It hadn't even scratched his shoulders! Once his heart had slowed down to a more natural rate, he stood up, knees shaking slightly, as he made his way out of the glade the way he came, completely in a daze. He wandered aimlessly in the forest, with no idea where he was, utterly unaware of his surroundings. Then, he heard a shout, which then became clearer as he realised what the person- no_, people_, were saying.

"Hiccup! Hiccup!" Came the shout, as he spotted a group of people about fifty metres away. He filled with relief.

"I'm over here!" He replied, as his father turned towards him. Relief was evident in Stoick's features, but it was quickly clouded over with anger.

"Where have you been?" he demanded. "We've been looking everywhere for you! I thought one of the wolves had taken you!"

" Iâ€|erâ€| got lost?" Hiccup offered, hoping his father wouldn't question what he'd been doing.

Stoick sighed. He knew bringing Hiccup was a mistake, but he had hoped it might help the boy grow up a bit and stop living in a daze all the time, never paying attention.

"Every time you leave the house, disaster happens. Can you not see that I've got more important things to worry about than what you're up to?" Stoick growled.

Hiccup was stung. He'd expected his father to be angry- but to say that Hiccup was less important than the wolves? He hoped his father was just saying it out of anger, but a small voice in the back of his mind agreed with what Stoick had said. He was insignificant; he didn't matter. Nothing he ever did would change that. _I'll always be Hiccup the useless_, he thought miserably.

Although Hiccup protested: "I couldn't help it!", not willing to just give in. "My shoelace had come undone, so I was sorting it out, but when I looked up, you were all gone!"

Stoick sighed again. "Gobber," He looked to his best friend and assistant. "Please take Hiccup home; I'll talk to him later." Stoick really didn't want to get into an argument with his son in front of all these people.

Hiccup glared at him. His father was treating him like he was a little kid who needed constant supervision, showing just how low his opinion was of Hiccup. He was led away by Gobber, who was trying to console the boy. Gobber had always been there for Hiccup since he was little- well, littler. He was the one who'd got Hiccup into inventing his strange gadgets, and was always there to comfort him when they went wrong (which was quite a regular occurrence).

"You can't blame him for being angry" Gobber started, "He was just scared of what could've happened to you!"

"It's just he always seems so disappointed in me, and he _never_ listens. I could tell him I had only a week left to live, and he's just nod and go back to what he was doing!" Hiccup ranted, barely pausing for breath.

"I wouldn't say he's _that_ bad!" Gobber protested, attempting to stick up for his friend but failing miserably. He knew that Stoick hadn't been the best father to Hiccup over the years, but he also knew that the reason Stoick worked so hard was to provide for his son. However, he couldn't completely excuse Stoick, because he could have made a bit more effort to interact with his son.

"and he always blames me! Even when it's not my fault! I can never do anything right!" Hiccup continued, although Gobber was barely listening now.

"Mm hmm!" He occasionally offered. He knew the best thing would be for Hiccup to get it off his chest, and Gobber was one of the few people he could do that with.

They eventually reached the house, having fallen into a companionable silence. Hiccup said goodbye to Gobber, who wasn't entirely happy to leave Hiccup alone, but had to get back to Stoick. Hiccup trudged up the stairs, his mind hurtling through what had happened that day. He couldn't believe that the wolf hadn't killed him! For the first time in as long as he could remember, he felt intrigued by wolves rather than repulsed by them. He opened his laptop and began researching them, trying to find out as much as he could about them.

After about four hours of researching, he'd started to think maybe wolves hadn't killed his mother. After all, there had only been 2 known wolf attacks on humans in the Archipelago in 300 years. Maybe wolves weren't the vicious predators he had thought them to be!

Really, the wolves were just like humans in many senses. They lived in family units, packs, and looked out for each other, like families were meant to. Not that I'd know though, Hiccup thought bitterly. Realising how late it was, he shut down his laptop and got ready for bed. He tossed and turned in bed for a long while, his mind in conflict. He wanted revenge for his mother, but he was no longer sure who was to blame. But there was one thing he did know for sure: he couldn't, _wouldn't_, kill a wolf.

School the next day dragged on for what felt like an eternity. All that was on his mind was the wolf. Hiccup's mind was buzzing; he'd decided to try to help the wolf. He knew it was madness, but he felt guilty of the state the wolf had been brought to.

"Oi, Useless!" An all too familiar voice called out as he walked down the corridor to go home. Hiccup groaned; he really wasn't in the mood for more of Snotlout's jibes.

"What do you want Snotlout?" He asked wearily, looking for an escape route.

"Just wondering how a 16 year old could get lost in the woods- isn't that something little kids do?" Snotlout smirked.

Ah. So he'd heard about that. Hiccup assumed that Spitelout, his uncle, had told Snotlout, who was unfortunately Hiccup's cousin. _Of course he told him_, Hiccup thought; _Spitelout hates me nearly as much as Snotlout does!_

"I mean, could you be any more pathetic? Snotlout continued, getting louder as he did so, with more and more people starting to pay attention. Hiccup blushed, mainly because he secretly agreed with Snotlout. He'd even been given the chance to kill a wolf, and he'd set it free! What sort of weirdo does that? But, he tried to act like it didn't bother him.

"It's not like you'd understand Snotlout, you weren't even invited to come on the hunt- maybe they think you're pathetic too?"

Snotlout scowled. How dare this runt question him? Although what he was saying was true- not the pathetic part of course- but why hadn't he been invited? He'd have to ask his dad when he got home, but for now he settled for just storming off, knowing that if he stayed Hiccup would somehow say something to embarrass him. Hiccup may be tiny but he was good at finding the faults in Snotlout's bravado.

Hiccup was relieved. He'd narrowly escaped one of Snotlout's 'lessons' which usually involved walking away with a few bruises.

On his way home, he stopped by the pharmacists to pick up bandages and antiseptic cream, in the hopes the wolf would actually let him close enough to use them. He also went to the butchers to pick up all the scraps that they couldn't sell. By the time he got home he'd spent all of his pocket money but felt determined. Hiccup packed his backpack with the stuff he'd need and set off into the woods.

****A/N:** I wasn't originally planning on updating quite so soon, but the reviews really motivated me. In this chapter, you'll get to meet Toothless properly (I just hope I've got his character right, this is my first fanfic after all XD) Thanks so much for all the reviews, favourites and follows, please review, I love reading them ^^ you never know, they might even make me write the next chapter even sooner! ;) Anyway, I hope you enjoy this chapter and thanks for taking the time to read my story :)**

Chapter 3: Forbidden Friendship

He walked for what felt like hours, with no sign of the clearing.

Hiccup groaned "Oh, the gods hate me. Some people manage to lose their pen or their favourite DVD, no, not me. I manage to lose an entire wolf!" He kicked a rock, only to trip over and roll down a hill. After multiple bumps and crashes, Hiccup reached the bottom and stood slowly, his joints protesting as he did so. He shook his head to get rid of the foggiest, but then he realised where he was.

"Yes!" He shouted, punching the air. Then he quickly covered his mouth, eyes wide, fearing he'd scared the wolf off with his shouts. _It's probably already gone by now_, he thought pessimistically.

Regardless, he edged through the gap in the rocks, until he was safely on the other side. Scanning his surroundings, he spotted a black shape by the stream. Feeling his heart flutter, he slowly walked over, trying his best to not make a single sound- and then he stepped on a twig. He sighed, hanging his head, before looking over to where the wolf was. Its eyes had shot open and it was looking straight at him, snarling slightly. Hiccup gulped. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea, he thought warily as he took a deep breath. All the things he'd read online said to be calm when facing wolves; they could sense your nerves. Hiccup sat down where he was, and after searching through his rucksack, he took out a parcel of the offcuts from the butchers. He opened up the newspaper that covered the meat, and placed a piece of (very disgusting) raw meat on the ground a small distance away from himself. He then yawned and looked away, something he'd learnt during his research that was meant to show that he meant no harm. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the wolf warily limping over, still emitting a low growl. It by no means trusted the strange human, but was _so_ hungry. Licking its lips longingly, it started towards the meat, checking every few moments that the human wasn't about to attempt anything stupid. It snapped the meat up whole, so hungry that it didn't even bother to chew. Hiccup flinched as the wolf sat just metres away from him, staring at him constantly. He slowly turned around to meet its gaze, but didn't stare directly into its eyes, which could be seen as a threat. The wolf looked at him inquisitively, and Hiccup would have laughed at the wolf's tilted head and innocent expression if he hadn't been focusing on stopping his body shaking like a leaf in a hurricane. The wolf sniffed the air, searching for more food, as Hiccup slowly reached into his bag and took another piece of meat. This time, rather than placing it on the ground, he held it out in front of him. The wolf looked suspiciously at him, but again, it was too hungry to resist. It leant forward to take it into his jaws. In the brief moment it had its mouth open, Hiccup realised it was missing a few

teeth.

He chuckled. "Toothlessâ€|" he mused at the ironic name.

Toothless began sniffing him, and Hiccup suppressed a laugh as his whiskers tickled his cheeks.

"I'm sorry. I- I don't have any moreâ€|" Hiccup explained, starting to fear what the wolf's reaction would be. But he needn't have worried. Toothless tilted his head questioningly, and then proceeded to retch. His eyes rolled back into his head as he regurgitated a bit of meat- straight onto Hiccup's lap. Hiccup swallowed the bile that had started to rise in his throat. The wolf made a motion for Hiccup to swallow, and all of the colour drained from his face. He couldn't believe itâ€| the wolf wanted him to eat meat that had just been in his stomach! Not to mention the fact that it was raw! Knowing there was no avoiding it, Hiccup resigned himself to his fate. Taking a deep breath, he brought the saliva covered raw beef to his mouth. He took a bite, and his face twisted in disgust. He had hoped that he could just spit it out when Toothless wasn't looking, but it now seemed he had no choice but to swallow, and so he did just that. The moment he did so, it came straight back up, and his eyes bulged in revulsion. He forced it back down, and finally he managed to swallow it.

"Bleurgh" He said, shaking his head and pulling a face as a shiver ran down his spine. The wolf, satisfied, gave a slight nod. Hiccup was shocked at how intelligent it seemed. It acted like aâ€| person. Hiccup's eyes shone with wonder at this realisation. It was then all doubt in his mind vanished, and he just knew it wasn't wolves that had killed his mother. How could a creature this amazing be that cruel? It can't have been a wolf, he thought with certainty. It felt weird to realise that something that had been his enemy for so long was nowâ€| a friend? He hoped that was the case. Looking up, he couldn't believe how close the wolf was- close enough to touch! Hiccup cautiously reached out a hand to pet the wolf, but Toothless snarled slightly and pulled away, limping off to the other side of the cove.

Not to be deterred, Hiccup followed, determined to gain the wolf's trust. He snuck up on the wolf quietly as it lay in the shade of the oak, and sat next to it. He reached out to touch him, but Toothless looked round at the last moment, almost rolling his eyes, before getting up and moving away. This pattern repeated several times, Hiccup not getting any closer to touching the wolf.

Hiccup eventually gave in, and sat down on a rock and began to doodle in the dirt with a stick. So absorbed in his drawing of the black wolf, he didn't notice the wolf sit down next to him, staring in wonder at what the human was doing. When Hiccup noticed Toothless, he stopped for a second, before continuing with his drawing. Toothless carried on staring at the drawing, and then walked off purposefully. Returning with a stick of his own, he tilted his head on the side so that the stick was touching the ground and began making random squiggles in the dirt. Hiccup looked up, realising what the wolf was doing. It was now his turn to look on in amazement. Toothless stopped, looking at his work critically, before nodding, happy with what he'd created. Hiccup slowly turned in a circle, and then proceeded to move away from the rock. When he heard a loud growl, he looked towards Toothless in shock. He realised he'd stepped on one of

the lines, so he moved his foot off of it. When he did so, the growling stopped. A smile began to grow on his face as he realised why the wolf was acting so strangely. To test his theory, he stepped on the line again, and again the wolf growled. He smiled openly now, but then frowned in concentration as he looked towards the ground, and very carefully made his way across the drawing. He smiled in triumph when he reached the edge of the drawing without Toothless growling again, but then he realised that Toothless was right behind him. Hiccup spun around, and then knelt down.

He turned his head away from Toothless, so as to not look him directly in the eyes, and then slowly stretched out his hand. After what felt like an eternity, he felt a warm, wet nose press against his hand briefly, before Toothless sneezed and walked off. Hiccup looked at his hand in awe, a grin creeping up on his face that refused to be dismissed. He'd done it- he'd actually stroked a wild wolf! He just couldn't believe it. _Now I need to treat that leg,_ he thought determinedly.

Hiccup returned to where he'd left his bag by the cliff, and took the things that he needed out of it. He approached Toothless, muttering reassuringly as he did so.

"It's ok Bud, I'm gonna help youâ€¦" he crooned softly, and reached a hand out to Toothless' wounded leg. The wolf growled slightly, but realised that the boy was trying to help, so he quietened down and let the limb go limp. Using a syringe, Hiccup irrigated the wound with saline solution to cleanse it. Toothless whimpered slightly, unable to hide the pain. Hiccup then held a needle in the flame of a lighter for several seconds. After allowing it to cool, he threaded it with the dissolvable thread he had got from the pharmacists.

"I'm not gonna lie bud, this'll hurt a bit, so just try not to bite my arm offâ€¦" Hiccup pleaded, and then began sewing up the wound. He hated putting Toothless through this, but he knew the wound would get infected otherwise.

After tying a knot in the thread, he doused the cut with saline again as an extra precaution, and then wrapped a bandage around the wolf's leg, securing it with a safety pin. He sat back and admired his work.

"Not bad, not bad, it'll do. Just don't mess around with it, ok Toothless?" The wolf looked up from sniffing his leg with an innocent look on his face, as if to say: _Who? Me?_

Hiccup laughed quietly. Looking at his watch, he realised how late it had gotten. His eyes widened in alarm, as he rushed around to put everything back in his bag. _Dad's gonna kill me_, he thought nervously. They were meant to be having dinner with one of Stoick's colleagues that evening, and Hiccup dreaded to think what would happen if he was late. All the while, Toothless was observing the boy curiously, and followed him around the cove.

"Listen, I've gotta get home, but I promise you I'll be back tomorrow!" He called over his shoulder as he squeezed through the hole and ran off into the woods. Toothless looked at the direction the boy had run off into, before going to lie back down in the shade. _Strange creatures, those humans_, he thought as he stared at the bandage around his leg. Sighing, he rested his head on the ground and

went to sleep.

4. Chapter 4: The Meeting

Chapter 4: The meeting

Stoick nervously drummed his fingers on his thighs, as he sat anxiously waiting for his son to appear.

"He's never where he should be!" Stoick muttered under his breath. He couldn't afford to miss this meeting, which could secure annual wolf cullings, and he definitely didn't want to make the council members wait. He was only bringing Hiccup along to try to get the boy involved in the politics of their small town, but the boy didn't seem so keen. Stoick had started pacing at this point. Five to six! They were meant to be leaving at quarter past! He took a deep breath in an attempt to calm his nerves, but it wasn't helping. Stoick began massaging his head to try to ward off the oncoming headache, when suddenly, the front door opened. His eyes shot open as he looked in the direction of the sound, his hands dropping from his face. A flash of relief went through him, but then his features clouded over in anger.

Hiccup was trying, unsuccessfully, to climb the stairs without his father noticing when Stoick's loud voice boomed: "And where, _exactly, _have you been?" and then, after noticing his son's clothes, he added, "What have you been up to? You're filthy!" Hiccup opened his mouth to answer, quickly trying to make up an excuse, but he was interrupted by his father.

"Tell me in the car, you have ten minutes to shower and get changed!" And with that, Stoick stormed off to check for the one hundredth time that he was dressed suitably.

Hiccup groaned as he rushed off to get in the shower.

"It's always work with him! Work, work, work! Gods forbid we're a few minutes late to his meeting!" Hiccup grumbled to no one but himself as he jumped out the shower and hurried to put on the suit his father had got for him. Hiccup really did not feel comfortable in it at all. _I'm like a 5 year old in his dad's clothes,_ he thought with a groan. As usual, his father had forgotten the small details of his plans. Like getting the right size clothes for his son. They were only a size or two out, but on Hiccup's tiny frame, that made a lot of difference. The shirt almost came down to his knees and the bottoms of his trousers dragged along the ground. He rolled up the bottom of the trousers and tucked his shirt in, which helped a little bit. _Thank the gods that the shoes are the right size_, Hiccup thought gratefully. He was clumsy enough at the best of times, let alone when his shoes were too big. After checking his appearance in the mirror, Hiccup nodded slightly and ran down the stairs to where his father was waiting. _It's not great, but it'll do_, he thought as he looked down at himself. Stoick was standing by the front door, like a dog raring to go out for a walk, only what Stoick had planned wouldn't be anywhere near as fun.

Without looking at his son, he stepped outside into the brisk evening air and marched over to the car. Hiccup followed, having to jog slightly to keep up with his dad's large strides.

"So where were you then?" Stoick resumed the earlier conversation as he pulled off of the drive.

"Iâ€¦ umâ€¦ was at the library. You know, doingâ€¦erâ€¦library stuffâ€¦" Hiccup finished nervously. He'd completely forgotten to come up with a good excuse whilst he was in the shower, and was definitely regretting it now. He couldn't help but wince at how lame it sounded, and yet for some strange reason his dad actually seemed to believe him. _Huh_, he thought, _maybe I'm better at this lying thing than I thoughtâ€¦_

"I know that's not the truth, but just make sure you're here in time next time. You were lucky today; 5 minutes later and we would've been too late, and were would that leave my campaign? I'm disappointed Hiccup, you should know better. See that it doesn't happen again." The car fell into an awkward silence, that wasn't broken until they reached the restaurant. _Ok, maybe I'm __**not**__ as good at lying as I believed_, Hiccup reflected, but he was glad his dad hadn't grounded him. He wouldn't be able to see Toothless if he had.

The restaurant looked posh, so naturally it would be highly overpriced. Hiccup gulped as he stepped inside, to be greeted by huge chandeliers and indulgent furnishings. Lights glittered on the dark ceiling like stars in the night's sky. He couldn't believe his eyes: it was stunning. He stumbled forward as his father nudged him in, but a nudge to Stoick was like a shove to Hiccup. Stoick shot a slightly apologetic smile to Hiccup, before taking a deep breath, turning towards the table of his colleagues with a large grin on his face.

"Good evening gentlemen! What a lovely place!" He boomed, and the assembled men agreed with nods and smiles.

"I'm so glad you could make it, Mayor Haddock, your presence is always appreciated at these council meetings." One of the councilmen said.

"No, no, the pleasure is all mine," Stoick beamed.

"So this must be your son! How are you Hiccup?"

Hiccup stuttered, "I- I'm ok, t- thanksâ€¦" but seeing Gobber seated with the men and giving an encouraging smile helped to settle his nerves. Both Stoick and Hiccup took a seat at the large table and everyone ordered their meals. Hiccup ordered sirloin steak, and couldn't help but giggle slightly at the thought of the 'meal' he'd had with Toothless earlier that day. _Hopefully this one won't be covered with wolf saliva though_, he thought. Once everyone had eaten, the meeting began properly.

"Now Stoick, these cullings are all well and good, but we've yet to see any results from them. The deer population is still declining just as fast as before, and the town's beginning to suffer for it. You know that we rely on the deer produce for much of the town's incomeâ€¦" One of the councilmen, Johann, stated.

"I know. And that is precisely why we're gathered here tonight. I propose that we should eliminate the entire wolf population of Berk." Stoick announced, resulting in a stunned silence.

"B-but how would we do that?!" Johann spluttered, "Where would we even start?!"

"The way we always do: guns and traps. We'll keep going until not a single one of those damned creatures are left. Now who's with me?" boomed Stoick, earning cheers of support from the councilmen. The other people in the restaurant shot curious glances over to their table.

Hiccup had listened to the discussion with horror, the colour draining from his face. They were going to kill all of the wolves; they were going to kill Toothless. He couldn't let that happen. His mind set, he knew he'd have to stop his father, no matter the cost.

When they returned home from the restaurant, Stoick halted Hiccup as he began the climb to his room.

"Hiccup, I'm going to have to leave you on your own for a week or so. I need to go to the city, talk with the mayor there, see if he'll lend us a hand; give us some traps, men and guns. You'll be ok, wont you? Gobber will check in on you now and then."

"Uh yeah, I'll be fine. I _am_ 15 you know, dadâ€¦" Hiccup replied, knowing that any other answer would be met with disappointment. _Besides, I'll be able to spend more time with Toothless,_ he thought excitedly.

"Good. I leave in the morning. Stay safe, don't get into trouble. I'll be back."

"And I'll be here," Hiccup offered with a weak smile, before continuing upstairs. His mind was spinning as he lay flat out on the bed, replying the events of the evening over and over.

How could he, Hiccup the useless, possibly save the wolves? It was impossible. But he had to try. He couldn't let his best friend, the only good thing in his life, be murdered. Toothless was the only one to accept him the way he was, without judging him. He'd given Hiccup a place he belonged, and it was now time for Hiccup to return that favour.

But how? That was the biggest question. Hiccup didn't yet know the answer, but he did know one thing: He wouldn't give up on his best friend. He'd find a way to save him.

**A/N: I apologise for this chapter being so crappy and short, I found it quite difficult to write. Also I'm sorry I took so long to update, I was really busy with school, and I also think I had a case of writers block. I'll try to make the next chapter a lot better, it'll be building on Hiccup and Toothless' relationship a bit more. Thanks so much for all the favourites, follows and reviews, they really do make my day 3 I'll try to update sooner this time, but I can't promise. Thanks again for reading this **

5. Chapter 5: Confrontation

Chapter 5: Confrontation

Stoick had left for the neighbouring town, and Hiccup had settled into his new routine of going to see Toothless before and after school. No longer did he have to make sure he was home on time, or fear being caught- well, for a week, anyway. But one week was better than nothing, and Hiccup was definitely making the most of it.

"Hey Toothless," he greeted as he walked into the cove, "I brought breakfast!" At the word 'breakfast', Toothless' head shot up and he came running over, his tail wagging so fast it was making his entire rump wag with it. Hiccup chuckled at the sight, as Toothless greeted him like the brothers they had become, giving him small licks and rubbing up against his legs. _Definitely a lot different to when I found him,_ mused Hiccup, setting the bag of fish down on the ground.

Whilst Toothless dug into his meal, Hiccup took the opportunity to take off the wolf's bandages and check the wounds. _They're healing nicely_, he thought, pleased, _he should be able to hunt for himself soonâ€¦_ This thought made Hiccup both happy and nervous. Happy because it meant his best friend would no longer be in pain, but nervous, for fear of his friend getting caught by hunters. Hiccup had woken up several times at night in a cold sweat after nightmares of seeing Toothless' head mounted on a wall, feeling extremely nauseous.

Hiccup chased these dark thoughts from his head as he applied ointment to the healing wound. By this point, Toothless had finished his meal, and was determined to see what Hiccup was doing, much to Hiccup's annoyance.

"Stay still, you useless canine," He laughed as he tried to put the bandage back on, but Toothless wasn't having it. With a mischievous look in his eyes, he tore the bandage out of Hiccup's hand and ran around the glade with it hanging out of his mouth like an oversized tongue, looking extremely proud of himself.

"Hey, give that back!" Hiccup called, chasing after his friend, laughing all the way. The chase continued for several minutes, until Hiccup collapsed, exhausted, on the ground. Toothless saw this as another game, and flopped on top of his pack brother, dropping the bandage and giving Hiccup slobbery kisses on the face.

"Eurgh, get off you oversized mutt!" Hiccup teased, pushing the large lump of a wolf off of himself before he was crushed. Toothless growled jokingly at the boy, having fully enjoyed their little game. Hiccup walked over to the bandage and picked it up tentatively, as it dripped with wolf saliva.

"Well this is now uselessâ€¦" He stated, making the decision to leave the leg unbandaged. _It's almost healed now anyway_, he justified, but it was also because he didn't want to risk being sat on again.

It was then that Hiccup looked at his watch and realised he had to get to school.

"Sorry bud, I have to go, but I'll be back later," he promised as the wolf looked at him with his head tilted questioningly to one side. Hiccup grabbed his bag and climbed out of the cove, and began the

trek through the woods to school. Unknown to him, Toothless followed him, but couldn't get through the gap in the rocks, so settled for whining softly and waiting for his friend to reappear.

Hiccup made it to school with plenty of time to spare. _Wow, must be a new record for me,_ he thought sarcastically, as he walked through the school gates. The day was rather uneventful- except for dodge ball that is.

Hiccup hated sports. He was the scrawniest, and didn't stand a chance against the big, strong teens, such as his not so favourite cousin, Snotlout. After splitting into two teams, 'jocks' on one side and 'nerds' on the other (completely unfair, if you asked Hiccup, but of course, no one ever did), the game commenced. Balls started flying instantly, all coming over from the jocks team, so it was no wonder that it wasn't long before Hiccup was the only member left on his team. Despite his lack of strength, Hiccup was very fast and agile, and these skills had increased even more from his 'games' with Toothless. This meant that Hiccup could avoid being hit, but he just didn't have the strength, let alone the ability to aim, to throw a ball and get any of the other team out. But the very idea that Hiccup had managed to avoid being hit angered Snotlout, who had decided enough was enough.

"Game's over for you, useless," he sneered at Hiccup, raising a ball, aiming it at where Hiccup stood wide eyed, drew it back and flung it forward, with enough force to knock him out. But what Snotlout didn't take into account was Hiccup dodging to one side at the last second, so the ball continued on its journey, bouncing off of the wall and straight into Snotlout's face. Snotlout had been staring dumbly at Hiccup one second, sprawled in a heap on the floor the next.

After lying dazed on the ground for a few moments, he realised that the 'nerds' were laughing at him. Him! How dare they laugh at him?! Pulling himself up, he glared at Hiccup, growling "You're gonna pay for this!"

>Hiccup gulped, slowly backing away, but luckily for him, the coach, who had been oblivious to the match as he read his book, blew a whistle to signify the end of the match, and all of the boys trudged out of the gym to get changed.<p>

Hiccup got changed as quickly as he could. It was his last lesson, so that meant he could go see Toothless. Slinging his rucksack on his back, he left the changing rooms and walked out of the gates. But what he didn't realise was that someone was following him!

As Hiccup reached the woods, he unconsciously released a sigh of relief. Not far now, he thought with anticipation, before a shadow loomed in front of him, cracking his knuckles.

"So, Useless, you thought you could get away with that little show did you? Well, you thought wrong!" Snotlout spat menacingly, taking a step towards Hiccup, raising his fist. Hiccup cried out in pain as it hit him solidly in the shoulder, knocking him to the ground as Snotlout continued to pummel him.

"Not so fast now, are you?" Snotlout gloated, as his fists connected time and time again with Hiccup's now limp body. Hiccup continued to wince with pain, feeling an impending sense of doom settle in his chest. But the next thing he knew, Snotlout's weight was gone, and

instead he could hear dangerously low growls. Looking up, he saw a wolf standing between himself and Snotlout, snarling viciously, determined to defend his best friend. Toothless enjoyed hearing the screams of Hiccup's tormenter as the large boy ran away. Little did Snotlout know, Hiccup had recorded the entire screaming incident, keeping Toothless from sight, of course. That could come in handy, he thought cunningly.

Once he deemed it safe, Toothless turned back to his friend, his eyes portraying his worries as he gently licked the boy's wounds.

"I'm ok, bud," Hiccup said shakily, running his hand through the wolf's thick fur, taking comfort from his warmth. "Thanks for saving me. How did you get here anyway? Must mean your leg's completely healed thenâ€¦" _At least Toothless didn't leave me the moment he could get out of the cove, _Hiccup thought, which had been one of his many fears. He didn't want to lose his best friend.

"C'mon big guy, we better head back before Snotlout sends out a search party, hopefully no one will believe him though," Hiccup said, as he pulled himself slowly to his feet and began heading towards the cove, Toothless close behind, still on the lookout for any threats. Freedom was the last thing on his mind right now. When he was first trapped in the cove, all he wanted was to be free again, to be able to run through the woods without a care, but not now. Now he had Hiccup, he planned on never leaving him. When he had heard the boy's cries, he'd panicked. He needed to get to him, but couldn't get out. After scrabbling at the rocks, he managed to squeeze his way through, and bounded towards his pack brother. _I'm coming, _he'd wanted to call out, but he knew Hiccup wouldn't hear, let alone understand. Even though Toothless often forgot, the boy was not in fact a wolf, and so couldn't speak wolf. When he saw the large boy punching Hiccup, he'd lost it. How dare he attack Hiccup? The boy who had saved Toothless' life? Toothless growled at the very idea of it.

They eventually reached the cove and climbed back through, Toothless finding it a lot easier this time. Hiccup sighed, looking at the wolf lovingly.

"I don't know how I coped without you," he said wistfully, as he gently stroked the wolf's large head which was resting on his lap. Toothless gave the boy a gentle nudge with his snout, reflecting Hiccup's expression in his own eyes. After sitting around for several hours, doing nothing but enjoying each other's company, Hiccup rose stiffly, stretching and yawning as he did so.
>"It's getting late, so I'm gonna head home, but I'll see you tomorrow morning as usual," he promised, climbing through the gap and beginning the walk home. It wasn't long before he realised that Toothless had snuck out behind him, and was trying to follow.<p>

"No Toothless, you have to stay in the cove- what if someone catches you?" Hiccup asked, exasperated.

Toothless growled softly in response, refusing to budge.

Hiccup sighed. "I guess you can come with me, but only until my dad gets home, and you have to stay out of sight!"

Toothless perked his ears, tongue hanging from his mouth as he gave

his best smile, running ahead of Hiccup and wagging his tail the whole way home.

It felt strange having someone else in his house, especially considering that somebody was a wolf. As reluctant as he'd been at first, having company was a pleasant change from his usual evenings of nothingness. He hadn't realised how much he'd come to depend on Toothless, for comfort, friendship, for love.

His dad loved him, but not in the openly caring way. Hiccup remembered his father as a jolly man, always laughing and teaching Hiccup new things. He always looked so happy when Hiccup achieved something, but also when he made a mess. He'd praise him, whatever the outcome. Gods, I miss that man, Hiccup thought longingly. As soon as Hiccup's mother went missing, Stoick changed. Gone was that jolly man, replaced by a man of stern words and disapproving scowls. It was like a wall of diamond separated them. They could both see each other through it, but just couldn't break it, no matter how hard they tried, and so eventually, they just gave up. But Hiccup continued wishing, with all his heart,

that he could spend one day, just one day, with the man he remembered as his father, and not this shell of a once happy man. Hiccup sighed, knowing that no matter how hard he wished, it could never happen. That man was gone now.

But through that pain, Hiccup had met his best friend, and unlike with his dad, he wasn't going to give him up without a fight.

After making dinner, Hiccup climbed into bed, snuggling deep into the covers. A weight suddenly appeared on his legs, and Hiccup looked up to see that Toothless had settled himself on his legs. Hiccup smiled softly. Despite the weight, it was actually quite comforting. A feeling of loneliness that he'd unknowingly been carrying around for years began to melt away, as he closed his eyes, sleeping soundly for the first time in as long as he could remember.

****A/N:** Thanks for reading guys! It's amazing to see that there are so many favourites on this story, I never realised you'd like it! This is the longest story I've ever written, and it's most likely due to all the kind reviews, follows and favourites. I probably would have given up long ago without them, so thank you 3 This chapter was a kind of filler, but hopefully the plot should start picking up soon, and I have some interested ideas of where its heading ;) as always, thank you for taking the time to read my story :) ******

****Thank you especially to BelieveInYourDreams, ZambleTheZombie and SadieStone for your repeatedly kind reviews, it makes my day to read them 3****

6. Chapter 6: Secrets

Chapter 6: Secrets

"Hiccup! You awake yet?" A voice called up the stairs.

Hiccup's eyes shot open. He looked towards the sound, then to Toothless sleeping on his bed, and then back to the sound, cursing under his breath. He'd completely forgotten that Gobber was coming

round to check on him, which was definitely not good when a certain wolf was currently sleeping in his bedroom. Toothless chose that exact moment to let out a huge yawn and leap off the bed going towards the door in search of breakfast. Hiccup's eyes widened as he sprinted to the door, intercepting Toothless and shouting; "Coming!" down the stairs to Gobber. He spun on the spot, trying to find a place to hide the large canine that was currently demolishing Hiccup's shoes.

Realising that his only chance was the wardrobe, Hiccup called Toothless over, who had just decided the shoes were dead and wouldn't attack him. He trotted across the room to where Hiccup was waiting impatiently, with a triumphant gleam in his eyes. But that gleam soon faded when he realised what Hiccup wanted him to do. _You want meâ€¦ to go in there?_ Toothless seemed to be asking disapprovingly, very unwilling to climb into the cramped wardrobe. Pushed for time, Hiccup resulted to trying to lift the wolf in, but needless to say, trying to lift a wolf that was almost as heavy as you is pretty much impossible. Hiccup groaned at the weight, but eventually Toothless decided that there must be a good reason for having to get into the weird, dark space. _That, or he thinks he'll get a treatâ€¦_ Hiccup thought cynically. Just in time, Hiccup closed the wardrobe doors as his bedroom door swung open. He leant backwards, trying to stop the banging of the doors caused by Toothless trying to get out. He'd gone in, realised there was no food and soon decided that he no longer wanted to play this strange game.

"Gobber! Hi Gobber, hey Gobber, hi!" Hiccup spluttered as his friend walked in.

"Hullo Hiccup, you al- what on earth are you doing lad?" Gobber asked of the boy who currently had his arms spread across the wardrobe doors and was rocking backwards and forwards, like he was having some sort of breakdown.

"I-er- nothing! The doors just won't stay shut," He replied quickly. Gobber narrowed his eyes.

"You're acting weirdâ€¦ well, weirder. What's wrong?" He questioned.

"Nothing's wrong! Why would there be anything unusual in this wardrobe? It's just a wardrobe Gobber, ha, ha, ha," Hiccup laughed uneasily.

"I didn't say that there _was_ anything unusual in the wardrobe." Hiccup groaned inwardly at his inability to lie at this point, "Are you sure you're ok? Haven't been â€¦ erâ€¦ up to something you shouldn't?"

"Nope, nope, definitely not. Just hanging out withâ€¦ umâ€¦ my good old friends Xbox and laptopâ€¦" He laughed again, before pushing Gobber through the door, which wasn't an easy task for someone as small as himself. Nevertheless, he managed to get him downstairs by saying: "Boy, am I hungry or what! Can I get you anything? Toast, coffee, tea?"

Hiccup jostled about the kitchen as Gobber replied "Coffee will be fine thanks, I'll get the milk from the fridge."

Hiccup turned around to thank Gobber, and at that moment, he saw Toothless sitting next to the fridge, looking at Gobber curiously. He panicked at the sight. _Gods I'm so stupid!_ He scolded himself; _I left the bedroom door open!_

"Ohâ€¦ umâ€¦ I just remembered, we're all out of milk! Guess I'll have to pop to the shops to get some, you want to come?" sincerely hoping that Gobber would say no and leave.

"Sure, got nothing better to do, I'll just grab my coat" He answered and, much to Hiccup's horror, began to turn towards where Toothless was now sniffing around for food.

"Don't worry, I'll grab it, you wait for me outside," Hiccup offered, trying to sound helpful.

"Er- Ok thenâ€¦" Gobber said, frowning at Hiccup's strange behaviour, but left the room anyway.

When Hiccup deemed it safe enough, after hearing the door slam shut, he turned to Toothless, glaring.

>"I thought I told you to stay out of sight! If he'd seen you, we'd both be dead! My father would kill you, I'd be shunned for the rest of my life, and everything would be over!" Hiccup ranted, although the wolf in question seemed to not be listening. He was more interested on what was on the menu for breakfast. Hiccup sighed.

"Fine, have it your way, you oversized dog, I'll see you in a bit- be good!" Hiccup warned, as he reached into the fridge and pulled out some venison steak left over from his father's dinner a few nights ago. Whilst Toothless was distracted by the meat, Hiccup snuck out the front door, making extra sure to lock it this time.<p>

"Right, ready to go!" Hiccup smiled, handing Gobber his coat. He thanked Hiccup, and they began the ten minute walk to the shops. The pair fell into a companionable silence; no one was speaking but it wasn't in the slightest bit awkward. If anything, it was rather peaceful. Hiccup was somewhat pleased that he'd managed to keep Toothless from sight, even if only just. They reached the shops, paid for the milk Hiccup didn't actually need, and then started walking home.

"So Hiccup, how's school? Been doing anything interesting?" Gobber inquired, trying to start up a conversation.

"It's, you know, school." Hiccup answered, shrugging his shoulders.

"I- I heard you got into something with Spitelout's sonâ€¦ Want to talk about it?" Gobber asked, in a way which suggested he wouldn't take no as an answer.

"Umâ€¦ not really, I mean, all I did was dodge. It _was_ dodge ball after all- clue's in the name. It's not my fault the ball just happened to rebound and hit him in the face."

Gobber chuckled. He had to admit; he wished he could have seen the look on the boy's face when Hiccup managed to dodge what had been described as a very powerful and fast throw. Seeing the black eye it had caused on Snotlout was almost good enough, but not quite. Of course, rumours had soon begun to spread around the small village,

turning into a game of Chinese whispers which had resulted in Hiccup apparently punching Snotlout in defence of some younger children. That version made Hiccup sound like a hero, so Gobber definitely wasn't going to spoil the attention the lad would get when he returned to school on Monday.

"Ah that's not what I heard, apparently you single-handedly brought down the school's biggest bully with just one punch and he went crying home to his mammy," Gobber recalled, a twinkle in his eye.

"Yep, ha, ha, very funny," Hiccup rolled his eyes. _As if I could do thatâ€¦ I can't even throw a ball! _But he played along anyway. "He didn't know what hit him! Literally! One minute he was acting all tough, the next he was sprawled on the ground, seeing stars! The villain was defeated, and I was victorious, never again would the monster take out his frustrations on his poor, unsuspecting victims." Hiccup finished dramatically.

Gobber laughed heartily. "Aye lad, that's exactly what I heard!"

"And you better believe it!" Hiccup chuckled.

"How's that friend of yours- Fishleggs is it?" Gobber asked.

Hiccup frowned at the sudden change of topic. "Fish_leggs_. He's good, I guessâ€¦"

"What, you don't know?"

"Well, I haven't really spoken to him for a while, we aren't _that_ close. We just talk sometimes at school."

"Hmâ€¦ Maybe you should get to know him a bit better. It'd do you some good to make a proper friend."

Hiccup smiled slightly at this. _If only he knewâ€¦_

"You never know," Gobber continued, "You might have a lot in common."

"Look, Gobber, your attempt at helping me make friends is touching, it really is, but I'm fine without it!"

"If you say so, but I really think-"

"Oh look, home already!" Hiccup interrupted. "I guess I'll see you tomorrow then."

"Er- yes, see you tomorrow lad." Gobber replied, walking away towards his car. He stopped for a moment, looked back over his shoulder, frowned, but then went on his way. _That lad was very strange sometimesâ€¦_

Once Gobber had left the drive, Hiccup allowed his body to release the tension it had been holding since earlier that morning when he'd heard Gobber in his house. It had been a reckless thing to do, letting Toothless stay at his house, but he couldn't honestly say he regretted it. Sure, it had been stupid, and Gobber had almost found

out, but hey, what's life without a little risk? Hiccup turned back to the house, unlocked the door, and almost fainted at the sight.

What had once been a nice, tidy house was now, well, a mess. Shoes were shredded, cushions torn, stuffing spread on the floor. And in the middle of it all, was a very pleased looking Toothless, grinning and wagging his tail. He came bounding over, rubbing up against Hiccup's legs and jumping up to give him little kisses, as if to say _Hey, where have you been? You missed all the fun!_

"_Toothless! _What have you done?" Hiccup groaned_. _"Dad's gonna kill me if he somehow sees this!" He rushed around, trying to clean it up, but wasn't entirely sure how he'd fix the shoes. Better get the sewing kit out, he sighed.

Four hours later, the cushions were pretty much back to normal, but the same couldn't be said for the shoes. _How am I gonna explain this one?_ Hiccup wondered, _a cleaning robot gone wrong or something?_ Although the idea sounded ridiculous, his dad would probably believe it, after all, it wasn't exactly the strangest thing Hiccup had come up with.

Better make it believable thenâ€¦!

Hiccup headed to his room, Toothless close on his heel, and went over to his worktable. His dad had bought it for him when he was eight and it was now home to all of Hiccup's gadgets, the good and the bad. He had all sorts of scrap on the table that he'd been collecting over the years, as well as his tools. He always found himself at the desk when he was frustrated or bored, his hands seemingly working instinctively to make some new invention. It had been this way for years. Hiccup would sit down at the table to do a bit of work for five minutes, and before he knew it, he'd been working for hours. He often lost track of time when he sat at the desk. Pinned on the walls around it were plans for inventions, some that had been made, others that Hiccup didn't have either the right tools for or the knowledge. So it was no surprise, of course, that Hiccup had in fact already started working on plans for a cleaning robot, but he didn't have any of the right stuff to make it. Regardless, he put some random pieces of scrap together to make it look like he had, just as extra proof he could use to scatter around the house to make his excuse more believable. Stoick was quite used to seeing the aftermath of Hiccup's failed inventions, so it wouldn't surprise him. Sure, he'd be angry, but he'd get over it pretty soon. _Not long until he gets home_, Hiccup thought sadly, _and then I'll somehow have to find a way to stop Toothless from following me_. He knew it would be _very_ difficult to get the stubborn wolf to stay at the cove.

Once he deemed his excuse believable enough, he went back downstairs, calling: "C'mon Toothless, want to go for a walk?" The sun had set so Hiccup reckoned they wouldn't be spotted, and Gods knew he needed a bit of fresh air to clear his mind. But a nasty surprise awaited him when he opened the door.

"Hello Hiccup, I hear you've been keeping a secret." Spitelout stated nastily, Snotlout grinning evilly over his father's shoulder.

**A/N: Thanks again for all of the kind reviews, follows and favourites, it always cheers me to see them. This chapter was another

filler type one, hopefully the plot will really start to pick up over the next chapter or so, I felt like Gobber and Hiccup hadn't had enough time together so I was trying to fix that XD Hope you enjoyed this chapter, and as always, please review, I love to hear your opinions :) **

BelieveInYourDreams- Aw glad you enjoyed it :) It depends really, I try to update at least once a week, but it may be more or less than that depending on how much time or inspiration I have XD

DonTheHero- I'm really glad you're enjoying it, and thank you so much for giving this story a chance :)

**XFaerieValkyriex- Haha, yeah, my dog loves to sleep either draped across my legs or in the curve of my body. In fact, I mirrored a lot of Toothless' behaviour with my dog, she's really useful to use as a reference XD **

**ZambleTheZombie- Aw thank you, I'm glad you think that, I was worried they were really out of character XD **

7. Chapter 7: Lies

Chapter 7: Lies

Hiccup paled._Gods, Snotlout told him, I'm so dead! How am I gonna get out of this one?_ He gulped .

"Iâ€¦ have no idea what you're talking aboutâ€¦" He started, not entirely sure what to say. Toothless was literally metres behind him. _They'll spot him, and it'll all be over! _Hiccup trembled slightly with nervous energy, but luckily Spitelout didn't spot it.

"Oh, I'm pretty sure you do, but let me spell it out for you. It involves you, a dog, and major trouble." Spitelout grinned. Hiccup felt a small amount of fear trickle away. _Snotlout thinks Toothless is a dog. Thank the Gods he doesn't pay attention to anything_â€¦

"Look, I don't know what story Snotlout's told you, but as far as I know, all that happened was that he got scared by a dog in the bushes, and ran off screaming." Hiccup stated, trying to take control of the situation.

Snotlout's face turned from smug to red with rage in a matter of seconds. "Why you-!" He started, but was interrupted by the sound of a car pulling onto the drive. His smug grin quickly returned.

"Looks like daddy's home!" he sung cheerfully. Hiccup's heart sunk through his chest like a stone. _Oh Gods, could this day get any worse?_ Not only did he have to deal with Spitelout, but his dad was home too- much earlier than planned!

Hiccup gulped as his father marched up the drive, his large strides covering the distance in no time.

"Spitelout," Stoick called out after a glance towards his son, "What brings you here?" Hiccup had to refrain from rolling his eyes. His

dad hadn't seen him in days, and he didn't even get a _"How are you Hiccup?"_ or even a simple _"Hi." _

"Oh nothing much," Spitelout said sarcastically, "except in your absence not only has your son attacked mine, but he set his dog on him too!"

Stoick frowned. Even though he didn't know his son as well as he probably should, that definitely did _not_ sound like Hiccup at all. And since when did Hiccup have a _dog_?

"Well son, what do you have to say?" Stoick asked, addressing his child for the first time since returning home.

However, Hiccup was too distracted to notice. He'd been panicking about the fact that Toothless was only metres behind him, when he realised he was completely wrong. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a black blur dart out of the open living room window, which stopped briefly to stare meaningfully at Hiccup, before retreating further into the shadows of the woods behind the house. Although Toothless was out of sight, Hiccup was pretty sure Toothless was hovering nearby, worried for his human. He almost sighed in relief. Gods only knew how, but Toothless seemed to have realised the problem, and had gotten away as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, Stoick had been observing the multitude of expressions which crossed over Hiccup's face in a matter of seconds, before saying: "Hiccup, are you even listening?"

Hiccup's face snapped back towards Stoick, a sheepish look on his face showing that he clearly hadn't been.

"Erâ€¦| Sorry, what was that?"

Stoick sighed. "I said: what do you have to say about what's occurred between you and Snotlout? And what's this about a dog?"

Hiccup quickly recovered, his head much clearer now that Toothless was safe. "Look, as I was telling Spitelout before you turned up, Snotlout was simply mistaken. I was taking a walk through the woods when I ran into him. Seconds later, a dog appeared. It growled at us, Snotlout ran off in one direction and the dog ran the other. I haven't seen it again since."

"Liar!" Snotlout exclaimed with rage.

"Enough!" Stoick roared, silencing both boys, including Hiccup who'd just began to protest. Stoick rubbed the bridge of his nose, trying to ward off the oncoming headache. He'd been home all but 5 minutes and already Hiccup was in trouble. It was a wonder the boy managed to survive without me, he thought, giving the boy little credit.

"Look Spitelout, it's clear there's been some sort of misunderstanding here. How about I deal with my son and you deal with yours?"

Spitelout, who'd looked ready to demand proper punishment, was quickly silenced by a meaningful look from his brother.

"Fine." He scowled, "Come on Snotlout, in the car, you've caused

enough trouble today."

Snotlout was shaking with anger, but did as his father ordered grudgingly, but not before glaring at Hiccup. Hiccup got the impression that he was saying that they'd settle this later, a thought that almost caused Hiccup to groan. Then 'settling' it would most likely result in Hiccup in pain. _Pain: love it._ He thought sourly. Reluctantly, he followed his dad inside the house, a few paces behind.

Stoick reached the house first.

"What on earth happened here?" Stoick bellowed, gesturing towards the mess Toothless had made. _Great, this day just keeps getting better and better,_ Hiccup thought sarcastically. He took a deep breath, and began his well thought out excuse.

The next dayâ€¦|

Hiccup pulled on his rucksack and stepped out of the door. He wasn't looking forward to school, but he couldn't risk being late again so he set off early. He strode down the driveway, and into the woods, to take a shortcut. He'd barely made it a few feet in when suddenly a large black shadow came barrelling into him. Hiccup flew backwards, and the two fell into a pile on the ground. He groaned, already knowing who it was.

"Toothless!" He moaned, "Couldn't you have just said hello normally? Why did I have to end up on the floor?" Toothless quickly gave his answer by proceeding to give him slobbery kisses.

"Ah- Toothless! You _know _that doesn't wash out!" Hiccup complained standing and shaking as much slobber off of him as possible. _Great,_ he thought, _now I'm gonna smell of fishy wolf saliva all day._ Toothless wagged his tail and let out a barking laugh. Hiccup couldn't stay mad at him for long though. It had felt weird sleeping without the reassuring weight of the wolf over his legs. It had only been one night, but Hiccup could already tell he wouldn't sleep well again without his friend by his side. Gathering up his things, the boy and wolf began the trek to school.

When they reached the school, Toothless seemed to think he could go in with Hiccup. He didn't know what the place was, but definitely did not want to leave his human to face it alone. He could tell from the body language of Hiccup that he really did not want to go in. Toothless couldn't understand it. _Why would you willingly go into a place when all your instincts are telling you not to?_

"Bud, you can't come. If anyone sees you, they'll freak out, and we'll both be dead. You have to go. I'll come to see you later- I promise." Hiccup said, giving the wolf a reassuring stroke. Toothless whined. He didn't like it, but what was the worst that could happen? As long as he stayed in the woods the whole time, he could quickly reach the boy if he needed to. Toothless gave in, and backed up several paces into the darkness of the trees.

Hiccup smiled gratefully. "Thanks bud." He turned back towards the school, and stepped out into the sunshine.

The rest of the day was rather uneventful. Sure, he had to put up

with Snotlout and Tuffnut's constant bullying, but when didn't he? He just got on with what he had to do quietly, trying to the best of ability to ignore all of the snide remarks. When the final bell rang after what seemed like a never-ending day, Hiccup flew out of the room surprisingly fast for someone who was notoriously bad at sports. Before he knew it, he was at the edge of the woods, where Toothless was waiting, his tail wagging furiously. He jumped up from his seated position to greet Hiccup, the intensity of his wagging tail causing his whole rump to sway with the motion. Hiccup grinned. He hadn't realised quite how much he'd been missing the wolf until he was with him again. It was like his head had cleared from a headache he hadn't even noticed having, and it wasn't until it was gone that he realised how horrible it was.

"C'mon bud, let's get going before someone spots us." And with that, the boy and wolf walked into the dark depths of the woods.

Ten minutes later, the pair were walking through a clearing, similar to Toothless' but nowhere near as stunning. True to his clumsy nature, Hiccup had fallen over multiple times, over sticks, leaves even- you name it, he'd probably tripped over it. By this point Toothless had stopped worrying each time that his human fell over, and instead seemed to look despairingly at Hiccup every time he tripped. He could tell it wasn't just a one off- that Hiccup was just extremely clumsy, so he wasn't entirely sure how the boy had survived the past years.

Hiccup on the other hand, considered the walk to be successful, thinking he hadn't fallen over that much- not compared to normal anyway. He was thinking about the time he'd face planted going down the steps into assembly at school, and how the entire room burst out laughing. Even the teachers found it difficult to keep a straight faced. His face still burned with embarrassment just thinking about it.

A low growl from Toothless distracted Hiccup from his thoughts, making him look up. The wolf had his hackles raised, his head lowered, and was staring into the trees at some invisible threat. Hiccup was instantly on edge- what if it was Snotlout again? He definitely wouldn't be able to lie his way out of this one.

Much to his horror, Toothless began stalking forwards, leaving Hiccup no choice but to follow, as he had absolutely no idea where he was. Maybe letting Toothless choose the route home wasn't the best idea, he reflected. Soon Toothless increased his pace to a steady jog, Hiccup stumbling to keep up.

They eventually reached another clearing, which was small and dark. In the centre stood a large barn that took up most of the clearing, with a smaller store room off to the side. The sound of voices made Hiccup duck behind a tree, praying that he hadn't been seen. Toothless was right next to him, crouching low behind a bush, his belly scraping the ground. Hiccup wasn't sure what, but something definitely wasn't right with these people- they were up to something.

"Don't forget to lock the store room, Savage, we don't want a repeat of last time," A voice called across the clearing, and Hiccup instantly disliked the speaker. He didn't know the person, or what they looked like, but something in him said that this man was bad

news. He knew he had to get out of there, but Toothless wouldn't budge, and Hiccup would never leave him behind.

"I'll do it now Alvin," A second voice responded, and moments later the click of the lock being turned could be heard.

"We can't have anyone stumbling across us again, or we'll definitely have to move on. We only just- how should I put this?- managed to 'silence' the last person who discovered us. And I've grown quite fond of the idiots of this town, it would be a shame to have to leaveâ€¦" The first voice- Alvin- pondered.

"Don't worry sir, I don't think anyone in the town would ever find us- as you say, they're too stupid." The person named Savage responded. Hiccup hated to think what earned the man his name. Whatever it was, it most likely wasn't good. After all, you wouldn't exactly give someone nice the nickname 'Savage'.

Alvin laughed heartily at this. "Aye, you're probably right. Come on, we'd better get going." A few minutes later, Hiccup heard the start of an engine and a loud rumble which gradually quietened the further away the car got, until the clearing was silent. He could tell the danger was gone, as Toothless was back to normal, panting softly and looking around, curious. It was almost as if he was looking for something.

Hiccup had to admit, he was rather curious as to what the two men were hiding. It obviously wasn't good from what they'd been saying, and every cell in his body told him to leave as quickly as possible, just pretend he had heard nothing. But instead he found himself walking cautiously towards the large barn, compelled by some unknown force.

The door was locked, as he'd expected. _Oh well; I guess I'll never know_, Hiccup thought, happy he wouldn't have to see what the men were talking about. But out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a small gap between the ground and the barn, where it seemed like a chunk had been broken away. It would be too small for a normal sized person to look through, but luckily (or maybe not, in Hiccup's view), he was small enough to peer through. He made his way over to it, and got down onto his stomach. Toothless gave him a weird look, as if asking what the boy was doing.

"I'll just take one look, and then we'll leave. It's probably nothingâ€¦" He murmured, almost as if to reassure himself. He'd look through, see just a barn full of completely normal things, and just walk away, thinking about how silly he'd been for getting so worked up. He'd soon forget about it and just go on as normal. But Hiccup's life was never that simple.

He shuffled towards the gap, stomach pressed against the dirt, and he managed to shrug his head and shoulders through the gap. What he saw left him stunned.

"Oh Godsâ€¦" he muttered.

****A/N:** Right, first off guys, I need to apologise for the amount of time it's taken me to update. I was completely bogged down with school work, and it took a while for me to figure out what I wanted to happen in this chapter, but I promise I'll try to update sooner

this time. And sorry for another cliff-hanger XD Thank you to all the people who left reviews, followed or added this story to their favourites, it really means a lot. I love getting the notifications, it's great to know you're all enjoying this story ^^ When I started writing it, I never expected it to get such a good reception considering it was my first one, but you guys are amazing, thank you so much for giving it a chance :) Thanks for reading, and as always, please leave a review to let me know what you think ;) **

8. Chapter 8: Revelations

Chapter 8: Revelations

Hiccup felt as though his stomach was about to empty itself of its contents. All around him, dangling from the ceiling on hooks, or in piles along the sides of the barn, were the mutilated carcasses of deer. They were stripped of their fur, antlers removed. The humid room was full of flies buzzing around the carcasses, filling his head with the high pitched whine of their tiny wings. Hiccup assumed the venison meat was in the containers that looked like refrigerators that lined one side of the barn, to stop it going bad in the warmth of the room. Even worse than the sight, was the smell. The sickening scent of blood clogged up his nose, a smell he knew would stay with him for a long time, no matter where he was. It was the sort of smell which clings to you; you could shower however many times you wanted, but it'd still be there.

Hiccup swallowed the bile which rose up his throat. He had to get out- now. He used his feet to pull himself backwards, his feet digging into the dirt for purchase. He flinched, feeling something attach itself to his ankle, before realising it was only Toothless, trying to help him get out.

All of a sudden, Hiccup was surrounded by natural light instead of the darkness of the barn. He took a deep breath, trying to get as much fresh air into his lungs as possible. He drew his knees up, hugging them against his chest, and bowed his head. He couldn't stop the tears leaking from his eyes at the thought of the torture the poor animals must have gone through. On some of the corpses you could see where the steel jaws of the traps, or the wire of the snares, had sliced through the flesh of the deer's ankles. The traps were completely inhumane. Hiccup assumed they used traps because the gunshots would give the hunters away to the locals. He trembled with anger at the unfairness of it all: the animals had to go through torture, just so that the hunters could make a bit of easy money. He was disturbed from his dark thoughts by Toothless' tongue gently licking away the tears that were spilling down his face.

Hiccup looked up at the wolf gratefully, who returned the gesture with an understanding look, a gentle smile, as if he somehow knew about the horrors the barn contained, and knew exactly how Hiccup felt. Upon seeing Toothless though, his face went slack as realisation dawned on him. It wasn't the wolves _ He thought, and then looked Toothless in the eyes, even paler than he'd been before.

"If it was the hunters, and not the wolves, then my father's been killing innocent creatures for years. The wolves had nothing to do with there being less deer." He said to Toothless, his eyes clouding

in rage. He sprang to his feet, determined to prove the wolves' innocence.

Hiccup marched over to the little shed that lay next to the barn, knowing he needed to be 100% sure before trying to tell his father. Sure enough, the shed was full of the deadly traps, which he could see through a small crack in the wood. Hiccup cursed. _Why didn't I bring my phone_? If he had, he could've taken photos there and then. He knew without photos, his father would never follow him into the woods to the clearing, not when he had 'other important things' he needed to be doing. Clenching his fists, Hiccup gave a small, bitter laugh. He shouldn't need photos; his father should take his word for it, like parents were meant to. But instead, his dad didn't even trust him to be able to look after himself for a couple of days, sending Gobber round to check on him. He sighed. There was no point thinking about this now- he needed to get home.

Hiccup spun on the spot and sprinted into the woods, Toothless close on his heels. He had to get home and grab his camera, so he could prove it to his dad; it was the only way. Hiccup's legs burnt from the exertion, but he pushed on. He had to be as fast as possible, and if that meant he'd have sore legs for a few days, then he was fine with it. _As long as I get the photosâ€¦_

By the time he reached the house, his small frame was shaking with exhaustion. His throat and chest burned; every breath was agony. But he was home, and that was all that mattered. He'd become lost several times, but Toothless soon got him back on track. If it hadn't been for the wolf, he'd still be wandering the woods, trying to find the way out. He gave the wolf a grateful hug, Toothless resting his head on the boy's shoulder and pulling him close to his body. Hiccup released the wolf, and then ran the short distance from the woods to his house and up the stairs to get the camera.

Toothless waited in the woods. He didn't know exactly what was happening, but he knew it was important, and something to do with the smell of death that had radiated out of the building in the clearing. Toothless still didn't know what it was that pulled him towards the barn; he just had a feeling that something significant was going to happen and followed it. Now, sitting outside the house waiting for Hiccup to return, he felt a sense of foreboding. He didn't know how or why, but things were changing. The sleepy town of Berk would never be the same.

Hiccup was soon back in the woods, panting from his constant running. He decided to rest a minute, even though he risked the hunters returning before him. He didn't want to stop, but he knew that if he didn't take a break, he may not even reach the clearing again. After several minutes, he rose shakily to his feet after laying flat out on the ground trying to get his breath back. He looked over at Toothless, almost as if for reassurance, before setting off again at a sprint.

Trees slashed at his face as he ran, twigs breaking underfoot and leaves crunching. As usual, he'd fallen over several times, but unlike usual, he was back up straight away, continuing the race to the clearing. If he'd had time to stop, he would have noticed that the forest was completely still, as if it was holding its breath. There was no birdsong, or rustle from the bushes as animals went about their daily business. The tension was climbing in the woods,

and it wouldn't be long before it would break with an explosion of noise and activity.

After running for what felt like only minutes but was in reality much longer than that, Hiccup was back at the dark clearing. There isn't a car, Hiccup sighed in relief, hoping that meant the hunters weren't back. But he was still on edge, knowing they could return at any minute. He worked quickly, taking photos through the various cracks and holes in the sides of the two buildings. He really didn't want to see the barn full of corpses again, but knew he had no choice, so he grudgingly pushed just his arms through the hole to take the picture, only looking at it to check it wasn't obscured by anything. He was just finishing up when he heard the sound of gravel crunching under tires, and in that moment, he felt his heart drop through his chest as if it was made of lead. He ran into the bushes as fast as his legs would carry him, and ducked down just in time, as the two men approached where he was hiding.

His heart pace quickened as he saw one of the men- Savage- reach down to pick something up out of the dirt. _Crap_, Hiccup cursed. He'd dropped the camera! Now not only could he not prove anything to Stoick, the hunters were sure to know someone had been there.

"Hey Alvin, look what I found!" Savage called out gleefully.

"What is it now?" Alvin replied gruffly.

"A camera, I think, but I dunnoâ€¦!"

Alvin's head snapped towards Savage.

"Give that to me." He ordered, and when Savage hesitated he snapped "Now!"

"Sorry Alvinâ€¦!" muttered Savage, handing the camera over to the man, disappointed. He thought he could have sold it, to get some money to treat himself to something- a new gun perhaps.

Alvin angrily scrolled through the photos on the camera, and Hiccup felt like his heart was going to burst out of his chest because of how fast it was beating.

Swearing, Alvin said, "Someone's been here- they've seen everything!" He turned on Savage, "I thought I told you to lock the barn!"

"I did- well, I'm pretty sure I didâ€¦!" Savage stuttered, fearing the rage on his partner's face. Only hours ago, Alvin had seemed in quite a good mood: they'd sold some of their catch and had gone to a bar for a couple of drinks to celebrate. That felt like a world away now.

"Argh! You useless imbecile! Can't you do anything right?" Alvin exclaimed. Savage looked guiltily at his feet. He was sure he'd locked it. He wouldn't forget something like that- would he?

"Now we're gonna have to leave again! And all because you couldn't lock a stupid door!" Alvin continued. He sighed and closed his eyes, rubbing his hand across his face wearily.

"Maybe we could find the person- make them 'forget' what they saw?"

Savage offered weakly.

"How would you expect to find them? Even in a town this small it would be like looking for a needle in a haystack! It would be-"He paused, realisation dawning on him. They didn't need to find anyone: the spy would come to them! He grinned evilly, a plan forming in his mind.

"Come on Savage, we have work to do." He said, marching away to the cover of the shed. Savage followed, looking understandably confused.

Hiccup breathed out shakily. Not only had he lost his only evidence, but the hunters knew he had been there. He didn't know what they had planned, except for the fact that it would not be good. He slowly rose to his feet from the crouching position he'd been in. His muscles groaned in protest against the movement, after having done so much running and then sitting in an uncomfortable position for so long. Toothless looked over at him, inquisitively, and he returned the look with a weak smile. There was no time for panicking now- he still needed to convince his father somehow. He stepped away from the edge of the clearing and deeper into the trees, treading the path he had already followed three times that day. Toothless jogged steadily at his side as he quickened his pace. He had no idea how, but he needed to prove to his dad once and for all that the wolves were not to blame. He'd tried something stupid; now it was time for something crazy.

Taking a deep breath, Hiccup stepped into his father's office at the town hall. He'd finally been able to get past reception after arguing with the receptionist that yes, Stoick did actually have a son. He wasn't getting anywhere with it, but luckily Gobber eventually appeared and vouched for Hiccup's identity. He looked slightly confused as to why Hiccup was visiting his father (which he never did) but avoided saying anything. After following a series of winding corridors, Hiccup eventually found himself outside of his dad's office. Hiccup coughed to let his dad know he was there.

"What is it Gobber?" Stoick asked wearily, not even looking up from the papers he was shuffling through.

"Erâ€¦ It's not Gobber, dad."

Stoick looked up quickly, his eyes flashing with surprise, before a wary expression settled on his face. "What are you doing here son? I'm busy."

Hiccup felt a spark of anger at that_. Aren't you always_, he thought bitterly.

"It's important dad, I have something I need to show you dad. Its- It'll change everything."

Stoick studied his son's features. He knew Hiccup would avoid coming to his office if at all possible, so he must be telling the truth. Still, can't it wait until later? He thought. He sighed. "Come on then; out with it."

"It's not something I can really tell you. You need to see it to believe it."

"Look Hiccup, I'm really busy trying to plan the culling. You can show me later when-"

"No!" Hiccup exclaimed angrily, causing Stoick to look at him in shock. Hiccup never shoutedâ€¦

"For once in your life, will you just listen to me? I'm your son, surely that must stand for something? You have to believe me when I say- it isn't the wolves. The wolves are innocent, they aren't taking the deer." Hiccup finished determinedly.

Stoick's expression turned from one of concern to blind rage. "What?" he asked quietly, anger burning in his eyes.

Hiccup faltered. "The wolves, they- they aren't-"

"What?!" Stoick shouted this time, causing Hiccup to shrink back slightly. Stoick stood up from his seat, throwing the chair backwards in his anger.

"How dare you come in here, telling me those- those monsters are innocent?!" He spat.

"They're not monsters!" Hiccup yelled in response, no longer willing to be the meek mannered son he'd always been. "They're compassionate, amazing creatures, no different to you or me! It's hunters who've been killing the deer, I found the barn, I can show you-"

"Enough!" Stoick bellowed. He ran his hand through his hair, before glaring daggers at his son. "After everything they've done to this family- to your mother, how can you stand there defending them?"

"Dadâ€¦"

"You've thrown your lot in with them. You're not one of us- You're not my son. Now go, I'll deal with this later." Stoick turned back to his work, visibly shaking with anger.

"No! Do you know how hard I've tried to be who you want me to be? Do you know the pain I put myself through, knowing I'd never be the son you wanted me to be? I tried so hard, and here you are, saying I failed you. How dare you stand there, with so little faith in your own son? Why would I lie about this?" Hiccup yelled, the anger he'd kept suppressed for years exploding from him like a volcano. "You weren't the only one who lost someone all those years ago! You may have lost your wife, but I lost my mother and father!" And with that, he ran out of the room, leaving Stoick speechless. He sighed shakily, and sat back down.

After several minutes trying to organise his thoughts, he called "Gobber!" who stepped warily into the room, having heard much of what had been exchanged between the man and his son.

"Yes?" he asked cautiously.

"We're moving the date of the culling. Get the men ready."

"For when?"

>"Four hours time."<p>

Gobber looked ready to argue, but one look from Stoick told him it was pointless. This was one thing Stoick would not be changing his mind on.

****A/N:** Here you go guys, another update ;) I felt bad about taking so long to update last time, and for giving you another cliffhanger, so I decided to update early :) Not far to go now, just a few more chapters :(but I'll try to make them as good as I can, I'm already half way through writing the next chapter so hopefully that should be up in the next day or two. Thanks once again to all the kind reviewers: DonTheHero, Breyannia, snowflakeangel21, ZambleTheZombie, Angryhenry and kitty.0 ;) And also thank you for all of the favourites and follows, they really do mean a lot, they inspire me to keep writing, so keep them coming ;) ******

****DonTheHero-** thank you for the kind words, yes I'm very sorry about the wait and yet another cliffhanger, but thank you so much for sticking with the story :) ******

9. Chapter 9: Numb

Chapter 9: Numb

Hiccup ran. He wasn't sure where to, but he just had to get away. He was numb to what was happening around him, not noticing Toothless trying to get his attention, or the cuts that covered his face as he ran through the thorny bushes. He just ran. After his outburst at the town hall, he no longer felt angry, just empty. The feeling of being a disappointment, of being unworthy, crushed Hiccup. His breaths came out as ragged gasps, tears streaming freely down his face; he could no longer hold them back. After running for Gods knew how long, he collapsed in a pile on the ground against a massive oak. Unbeknownst to him, he was back in the clearing, the clearing where it all started with Toothless. It hadn't changed one bit- but why would it have? It wasn't long ago that he was there, trying to help the wolf who'd been injured because of him. No, he was unaware of all of this, even of his best friend at his side trying to comfort him, as he became lost in his own head. Useless. Unworthy. An Embarrassment. Unwanted. The insults ran over and over in his head, like a terrible song stuck on repeat. He shook his head, trying to clear it of these thoughts, but to no avail. He couldn't rid himself of the despair that shrouded him as he wallowed in pity. He didn't know what to do. He couldn't- wouldn't- go back to a home where he wasn't wanted. He had nowhere to go- he was alone. He was sinking deeper and deeper into his grief, but all of a sudden, a light cut through the darkness that was engulfing him. He saw Toothless, trying to protect him from the invisible villains of his mind, giving him reassuring licks and nips, trying to bring him back to reality.

Toothless, Hiccup thought fondly, gazing over at the large black wolf. No, I'm not alone. I have Toothless. And that's all that matters. Even if I could go back to when we met, I wouldn't change a thing. Even if it means I'm a 'traitor'.

He took a deep breath, before looking at Toothless with determination. What did it matter that his dad wouldn't help?

Toothless was there; he'd never give up on Hiccup.

"We have to stop them, bud. No matter what it takes. I don't know how, but we will." All of a sudden, an idea struck Hiccup. He'd use what had started all of this: one of his inventions. He rose to his feet, and looked at Toothless, who was standing ready for instructions. He would follow the boy to the ends of the earth and back.

"Let's go." Hiccup said, and with that, boy and wolf walked the familiar route to Hiccup's house, moving as one.

Throwing one of his old contraptions into his rucksack, Hiccup stepped out the house. He had found a netted trap he'd made months ago to use on the wolves (before he knew they were innocent, of course). He'd wait until the two hunters had left again, before stringing it up in the doorway of the barn. When they opened the door, the net would fall onto them, the weights in each of the corners preventing them from being able to lift it off of themselves. The net was made out of thick wire, too thick to be cut with a knife. It would keep the two hunters immobile until Hiccup got the police there to arrest the men. He had it all planned out, he just had to pray it would work, and not go wrong like so many of his inventions did.

He was soon marching through the woods, his best friend at his side. Whatever happened, they'd see it through together.

Hiccup was brought out his thoughts by a loud gunshot. It pierced through the silence of the forest, before the woods erupted into noise and movement. The first gunshot was followed by others, making Hiccup's blood run cold. His father had started the culling early— Anger surged through his veins at his father's betrayal, but he soon put that anger to one side; he had to focus on the task at hand. He quickened his pace. He needed to reach the barn, to try to stop the needless deaths at his father's hands.

Hiccup soon reached the clearing, and to his relief the hunter's car wasn't there. Now he was at the clearing, doubt crept up his spine. But he ignored it, knowing it was now or never. If he didn't do this, innocent lives would be lost. One look from Toothless reassured Hiccup, as he stepped out into the clearing. He ran over to the entrance of the barn; there was no time to lose. It was locked, just as he'd expected. Hiccup pulled out a lock pick from his bag and set about unlocking the massive padlock that bound the two large doors together. His hands fumbled several times, but eventually the padlock opened with a satisfying click. Hiccup had prepared himself for what laid within, but that still didn't stop him gagging as the sickening smell hit him, rolling over him in waves. Avoiding breathing through his mouth (which didn't help much) he pulled the massive net out of his bag. In a stroke of luck, he noticed a ladder leaning against the wall, so he ran over to grab it. It would have been nearly impossible to set the trap without it. He'd seen the ladder when he'd looked through the hole for the first time, but hadn't really been paying attention to it. When he remembered about it, it was just a matter of praying that the hunters hadn't removed it.

After what felt like an eternity, the net was eventually set. He exited the barn as quickly as possible, pushing the doors closed behind him and relocking them. If everything went to plan, the

opening of the doors should trigger the trap, but that was a big 'if'. He backed away from the barn, looking for somewhere to hide until the two hunters returned. Preferably it needed to be close to the road so that he could call the police as soon as they reappeared. He spotted a ditch which was obscured by large bush over by the small shed, so he slowly crept over to it, keeping his eyes open for any security cameras on the side of the barn which could tell the hunters who he was if his plan failed.

He was almost at the shed, when unbearable agony shot up his left leg. He let out a feral scream, no longer fearing, or caring, if the hunters found him. Whilst he'd been busy looking up, he hadn't been watching where he was walking, and had unwittingly stepped into the steel jaws of a trap. He was in agony as the tiny teeth of the trap tore through flesh and reached bone, like a metal mouth of daggers. His breath came out in uneven bursts, trying to breathe through the pain but failing miserably. He glanced down at the wound: big mistake. The sight turned his stomach, making him feel even worse. His entire leg was covered in blood, the vicious teeth of the trap buried out of sight in his leg. The pain was quickly increasing, to levels he'd never experienced before. His mind began to cloud over in pain, as he fell to his right knee, trying to keep his left leg as still as possible. He was in too much pain to try and remove the trap. Instead, he felt it slowly draining the life out of him; with every drop of blood he lost, he became further removed from reality. It was his only escape from the pain, and even that wasn't much refuge. His skin had turned deathly pale, his ragged breaths coming out further and further apart as he began to slip into unconsciousness, but he forced his eyes open, determined to stay awake.

Toothless shot over to the boy when he heard the scream, his heart racing with panic. His human was crouched over, unmoving, when he reached him, the only signs of life the occasional sob that racked his small frame. Toothless ran around Hiccup, trying to see what was wrong, giving him the occasional lick to get him to move. He took a while, but eventually he slowly looked at Toothless, his eyes full of pain as he looked at the wolf numbly. Toothless whined. Something was wrong, something that he couldn't fix. He hated feeling that way. He wanted to chase off whatever was hurting his human, but he couldn't, and that killed him inside. He nudged Hiccup with his nose when the boy's eyes began to close.

"Heyâ€|Bud" Hiccup said weakly. "I-I messed up pr-pretty bad, didn't I?" he grimaced faintly at the memory of his fatal mistake. Toothless let out a long, grieving whine, which broke Hiccup's heart.

"Just-Just promise meâ€| promise me you'll stay safe. G-get as far away from m-my dad and his hunters as p-possibleâ€|please?" He pleaded. The wolf growled as if he understood, and disagreed.

"Butâ€| stay with m-me untilâ€| untilâ€| y'knowâ€|"Hiccup trailed off, knowing his request was selfish, but as much as he wanted Toothless to be safe, he didn't want to be alone either. His eyelids began to droop close, until the sound of a cross between a growl and a whimper and the sound of running forced them open again. He looked up just in time to see Toothless shoot into the woods, out of sight.

"Pleaseâ€¦ don't leave meâ€¦" he mumbled, as the tears he'd been trying to suppress slipped down his face. He briefly realised that Toothless had left in the direction of the gunshots, before drifting into darkness.

Stoick reloaded his gun with grim determination. He would make sure all of the monsters that had stolen his wife and son from him died, even if it was the last thing he did.

"C'mon, we're wasting light here!" He called out to his men, giving the signal to move forward. All of a sudden, a large black wolf darted across the path in front of him. It stared at him, panting with exertion, as if waiting for something. Stoick aimed his gun at it, but before he could shoot, it was gone as quickly as it had appeared. He spotted it about 10 metres away in the undergrowth, staring at him again. It was putting Stoick on edge, a feeling he didn't enjoy at all. His mind set, he followed the wolf, determined to catch the creature and rid the world of one more monster.

Hiccup woke to a bucket of icy water being poured on his head. _Well, that was a bit rude_, he thought dryly, before he remembered what had happened. He slowly cracked open his eyes, as blinding light streamed through. His leg no longer burned; it was completely numb, a feeling he feared even more than the pain.

"Well, sleeping beauty finally awakes!" Cackled an evil voice- Alvin, he groggily realised.

"Now boy, I don't know if you're crazy or just plain stupid. Probably the latter, if the rest of this town is anything to go by..." He mused, as Hiccup blinked several times, trying to clear the fog that had settled across his mind. He looked down towards his leg with fear as he realised it was still in the trap and looked just as bad as before.

"Did you really think you could go snooping around here, and get away with it? You didn't even try to conceal yourself- your tracks were everywhere! It didn't take a genius to figure out your usual routes- even Savage could probably do it!" Savage had been nodding as Alvin spoke, but at this he frowned slightly. "All that we had to do is set a trap, and next thing we knew, we'd caught a rat!" Alvin continued, grinning.

"Youâ€¦ won't g-get awayâ€¦ with thisâ€¦" Hiccup stammered weakly. "They'll find youâ€¦ and y-youâ€¦"

"Now, now boy, I hardly think you're in a position to make threats, are you? You can't even stand, you can barely speak or move- it's pretty pathetic actually. I guess that only leaves me to put you out of your miseryâ€¦" Alvin drawled.

Oh Gods, Hiccup thought, his eyes widening with horror, _they're gonna kill me, and no one will ever know. My dad will just think I ran away and do nothing except carry on killing. And Toothlessâ€¦ oh Toothlessâ€¦_ He began trembling in fear for the creatures that were sure to die all because he was clumsy! Alvin, however, misinterpreted this.

"Aw, don't worry kid, I'll make it quick. It won't hurt- much!" He

added with a wink, causing Hiccup's heart to beat a little faster, if that was even possible. It already felt like it was going 100 miles an hour. All of this was just a game to the crazy hunters. They knew exactly what they were doing, and Hiccup couldn't even attempt to convince himself that they were just delusional. They deserved to be locked up and left to rot, he thought with contempt. The thought shocked him. He'd never felt so strongly about someone before. But he quickly got over it- they deserved the hatred.

"Well, let's get this over with, we haven't got all day." Alvin said, raising the gun he had in his hand and aiming it at Hiccup's head.

****A/N:** Thanks for all of the reviews, favourites and follows, you guys are great, it always cheers me up when I get the notifications ******** sorry it took a lot longer than planned to update, my computer crashed and lost all my work so I had to completely re-write this chapter :/ so needless to say, I'm afraid it isn't my best, but I tried XD And please don't hate me for yet another cliff hanger, I had nowhere else where I could end the chapter XD sorry Stoick seems like such an idiot- I promise he'll get better over the next few chapters ;) only a couple of chapters left so stick with me ;) ******

****Kitty.0:** Wow your guesses were pretty much spot on! The thing about his mother was what I was thinking when I wrote the story, but I just wasn't sure how to fit it in so I left it out (starting to regret that though!) maybe if I ever edit this story I'll add that inâ€| ******

****Once again guys, please review, favourite and follow, it means a lot ;) (free hugs from Toothless if you do ^^)****

10. Chapter 10: Forgive Me

Chapter 10: Forgive Me

Hiccup's eyes widened as the gun was pointed at him. This is it, he thought, accepting his fate. He no longer had the strength to fight the inevitable, to keep up the pretence that everything was going to be ok. Accepting it didn't make it any easier though. He couldn't believe that in a few short moments, he'd be dead. He wanted to sob at the unfairness of it all; there was still so much he needed to do. Hiccup trembled as he gulped back the tears that were threatening to spill. I can't give them the satisfaction. Taking a deep breath, he closed his eyes as a click came from the gun.

He prepared himself for the sharp pain, but it didn't come. He opened his eyes a crack, only to see something jump in front of him, snarling.

"Toothless!" he exclaimed gleefully, despite the situation. Sure, he was bleeding out and had a gun pointed at him, but with Toothless by him he felt he could face it. He felt strong.

Toothless looked over his shoulder briefly to give the boy a wolfy smile, before fixing his gaze on the humans who had dared to threaten his boy. He snarled viciously, lips curled back in disgust and sharp teeth bared. Saliva dripped from his gaping jaw as he lowered his head, but not his gaze, ready to pounce on the man cowering in front

of him.

The man glanced around desperately for his weapon, discarded unwillingly when the wolf had appeared. The roles were now reversed; it was Alvin who was the hunted, no longer the hunter. He tried to get up, to run away, but a growl from the wolf soon stopped him. It pawed the ground slowly, turning up the earth beneath its paws in anticipation of the kill ahead.

But just as Toothless was about to pounce, a cry from his human soon stopped him. Hiccup had tried, unsuccessfully, to get back to his feet, hating the fact that he was practically cowering weakly on the ground. _What would dad say?_ He thought angrily at himself. However, as soon as his left leg moved slightly, the pain returned suddenly, just as bad as before, if not worse. It came in tsunami waves; it would recede, lulling him into a false sense of security, before crashing over him forcefully. He tried to bite back the tears once more, but it was no use. Toothless whimpered at him with concern, his head tilted questioningly. Hiccup attempted to smile reassuringly at the wolf, but it came out more like a grimace. He fought back the darkness that threatened to cover him. _Now's really_ _**not**_ _the time_, he thought as he swayed dizzily with blurry eyes. He couldn't faint now. He couldn't- wouldn't- leave Toothless to face the hunters alone. He may not be able to stand, but at least he was there for him, like Toothless always had been for himself. And that's all that mattered.

The click of a gun shocked Hiccup out of his thoughts as he looked up from the wolf to see Alvin pointing his gun at the two of them, grinning in satisfaction. _The balance is restored,_ he thought smugly, _me in power and them cowering in front of me. _Savage had fainted long ago, completely useless, so it was up to him to end this. And to be honest, that rather suited him. He laughed at the pained expression on the boy's face, glad he was the cause of it.

"It's over. Give up." Alvin smiled.

Hiccup's expression turned cold at the command. It was something he'd heard many times, and always from bullies like Snotlout or Tuffnut. And this man was no different. Older perhaps, but still just as horrible. Hiccup had had enough; he wouldn't let himself get pushed around anymore, even if it meant he'd die. It was time he stood up for himself.

"No." He stated simply, and Alvin's smile faded slightly.

"What?" He asked, confused.

"I said no. I'm fed up of people like you bossing people like me around. Kill me if you want. It won't change anything. You'll still be a jerk, and I'll still be right. What you're doing is wrong, and it's only a matter of time before you get caught. I'll gladly die if it means the end of people like you." He finished, shocked that he'd made it through without passing out from the pain.

Alvin stared dumbly at Hiccup for a few seconds, before bursting out laughing, gaining volume gradually. Hiccup narrowed his eyes. _Well that wasn't the response I was going for_, he thought dryly.

"Lovely speech boy, I'll be sure to remember that when I'm burying your body. No one will hear the gunshot, not with the culling-" He stopped suddenly, only just realising that the shooting had stopped. He shrugged his shoulders, deeming it unimportant. Until, that is, he heard the click of guns. He turned around, to see a very angry Mayor glaring at him, with about twenty men pointing their guns at him.

"Get away from my son." Stoick spat with cold anger, almost seeming to double in size as he tensed up, ready to kill the man who had dared harm his boy.

Alvin staggered a step back. But accepting that there was no escape, he decided to go down fighting. With a yell, he launched himself at the large man, fists flailing as he rained punches on the man. Stoick however, didn't even seem to feel it, as he gave his own perfectly timed punch to the man's abdomen, hearing the satisfying crack of his ribs.

Alvin sank to the ground, head bowed. Stoick glared at him one last time, before turning to the unconscious form of his son, his eyes softening instantly. He didn't care anymore about the words they'd exchanged earlier. They'd just been angry, that's all, and Stoick had gone way too far. He didn't even care about the wolf which was stood protectively over his boy. He began to walk over to his son, but froze at a shout from Gobber. He spun around, to see that Alvin had once again risen with the gun aimed at him_. This man just doesn't know when to give up_, he thought, rolling his eyes. There was no way the hunter could harm him, not when his men all had their guns aimed at him. Before he could say anything though, a black blur leapt past him and landed on the hunter, quickly silencing his screams before returning to Hiccup. It was all over so quickly that Stoick barely had time to do anything. _But the hunter deserved what he'd got_, Stoick thought coldly, _although I would have liked to see him suffer a little more after how he's made Hiccup suffer_. Little did he know that Toothless felt exactly the same.

Stoick glanced warily at the wolf that lay next to his son, before shaking away the niggling doubt at the back of his mind as he ran over to Hiccup, chucking his gun to one side and cradling the boy's limp form close to him. He lowered his head to Hiccup's chest, almost scared of what he might find. His body tensed at the silence, but then all that tension flooded away as he heard the weak, irregular beat of the boy's heart.

"He's alive!" Stoick whispered quietly, eyes shining with tears of joy. _Thank the Gods_, he thought, turning towards the crowd that had gathered behind him.

"Call an ambulance!" he shouted at them, and they quickly woke from their stupor, digging through their pockets and punching in the digits for the emergency services. In their panic, they didn't realise that only one of them actually needed to make the call.

Stoick looked up from Hiccup as he heard approaching footsteps. It was Gobber.

"He was right," Gobber started. "The evidence is all here. These bags of dirt were the ones killing the deer, not the wolves." Gobber

glared at the dead form of Alvin on the floor with blood pooling around him, and then at the other hunter who was trying to plead his innocence as Spitelout drew back his fist to knock the man out. Gobber smiled as the man's expression went blank before collapsing to the ground unconscious. Spitelout returned the smile.

Meanwhile, Stoick was hugging his boy tightly. He'd never let him go again.

"I'm so, so sorry son." He moaned as he looked at the child in his arms, reminded of when Hiccup was just a baby. _He wasn't that much smaller back then,_ he thought with a small smile. If he hadn't known better, he almost could have forgotten everything that had happened. _All that matters is that Hiccup's still alive,_ he thought as tears trickled through his clenched eyelids and down his face, dampening his thick beard. His eyes shot open in shock however when he felt a rough tongue on his cheek. Sitting in front of him, wagging his tail weakly, was the wolf. A sight which once would have made his blood boil now only filled him with relief. He smiled softly at the creature in front of him. No longer blinded by hate, he couldn't help but notice how beautiful wolves actually were. His heart broke a little as he thought about all the wolves that had died because of him. _That stops now,_ he thought.

"I'm-I'm sorry. For everything. You were there for him when I wasn't, and I can never forgive myself for that. I was too wrapped up in my own self pity to see how much he needed me. But I promise you, I won't let that happen again. And if it seems that I am, then you better let me know. I don't ever want to go back to that."

Toothless looked at the weeping man quizzically. This man had been the cause of much of Hiccup's pain. Toothless felt like he should hate him, but he just couldn't. He could tell the man hadn't set out to harm his boy, and from the sounds of it, never would do so again. Toothless lowered his head and wagged his tail, trying to tell the man that it was ok, but this seemed to make the man cry even more, much to Toothless' dismay.

"I'm- I'm so, so s-sorry" Stoick spluttered, and it was no longer obvious who he was talking to. Toothless raised his head as he heard the wail of an ambulance's siren getting ever closer.

**A/N: Well guys, Alvin is finally dead and Stoick has seen the error of his ways. Only one chapter to go now :(I'll try to get it written as soon as possible but I can't make any promises. What did you think? Not my best chapter so far, but I tried my best XD This chapter is slightly shorter than normal as I wanted to leave Hiccup's recovery for the last chapter. As always, thank you so much for all the reviews, favourites and follows (over 50! :0). I never thought this story would get such a good response, especially as it's my first. It's so encouraging reading all of the reviews and seeing how many of you have added this story to your favourites and have followed it. It's only thanks to you guys that I've got this far with it, so thank you so much 3 **

11. Chapter 11: Homecoming

Chapter 11: Homecoming

Hiccup was dimly aware of an annoyingly persistent beeping noise. At first he thought it was his alarm. _Great, late for school again, as usual._ But as he gradually became more and more awake, he realised it soundedâ€¦ different. Hiccup groggily blinked his eyes open, squinting at the blinding light which streamed through the crack of his eyelids. Even once the cloudiness had faded, Hiccup still didn't know where he was. Everything seemed so white, so sterile. The smell of disinfectant was heavy in the air, clogging his nostrils with the trademark scent of- hospitals! Suddenly realising where he was, he trembled in fear. _Oh gods, what happened? _He panicked. Slowly, the memories trickled back. The culling, the hunters, the trap. Hiccup opened his eyes properly, and found himself very definitely in a hospital room, albeit a very posh looking one. He turned his head stiffly to take in his surroundings, his neck protesting from the lack of movement. To his left stood a drip, with a tube that lead down and into his arm. He looked at it curiously, surprised he hadn't noticed it before, and yet now he had, he found the restriction rather annoying. The room was quite spacious, and a lot nicer than what he'd expect for a hospital. Asides from the white walls, the room seemed almost cheerful, with framed pictures lining the walls, of things like sunrises and happy families. All of the things that would make a person feel hopeful, Hiccup figured. He slowly turned his head so he was looking the other way, and was surprised to see a large figure on a contrastingly small chair hunched over with his head resting on the bed. The thick auburn hair quickly identified the figure as Stoick, which was a bit of a shock to Hiccup's system, to say the least. It was the first time in ages Hiccup had seen his dad justâ€¦ not doing anything. Normally Stoick would have a phone pressed to his ear, or would be barking orders at either Hiccup or the group of people who always seemed to be walking in his shadow, so to see him just laying there, doing nothing was, well, strange. Hiccup found himself just staring at the back of his dad's head, not entirely sure why a man who had disowned him seemed to care enough about him to not only get him a most likely very expensive hospital room but to also stay with him, even when he surely had more important things to be doing with his life.

Hiccup slowly, cautiously, reached out a weak hand and rested it on his father's huge shoulder and gave it a gentle shake, trying(unsucccessfully, as it turned out) not to scare the man. Stoick sat bolt upright straight away, as if he hadn't even been sleeping. His eyes were rimmed red, from crying or lack of sleep, or perhaps a mix of both. Frown lines were etched into his large forehead, making him look a lot older than he actually was. Stoick's expression changed quickly from one of panic to a relieved grin.

"Oh thank the gods, Hiccup, you're awake." Stoick said, tears threatening to spill.

Hiccup was shocked. He'd never seen his dad so emotional. To be honest, it kinda scared him. _Something must definitely be wrong_, Hiccup frowned, but he just couldn't work out what it was.

"Ermâ€¦dad? You okay?" He asked slowly.

"I couldn't be better," Stoick grinned, "You're awake."

"Starting to wonder if I really amâ€¦" Hiccup muttered quietly under his breath, finding it hard to believe that he wasn't dreaming. His

dad never cried, let alone over his son. "Um- what's wrong?" Hiccup asked, loud enough this time for Stoick to hear.

He looked slightly shocked. "How much do you remember?" Stoick asked questioningly.

"Erâ€¦ I remember the culling, the hunters, the trap, Too-Toothless!" Hiccup suddenly exclaimed. _Oh gods, how could I forget Toothless? _"What happened? Where is he? Please tell me-"

"He's fine. Desperate to see you, but fine. That's one clever friend you have there, coming to fetch me. Although you could say it was reckless, considering I almost shot himâ€¦" Stoick trailed off, face turning red as he realised what he'd said.

"You'd never get him- he's too fast." Hiccup grinned, his heart threatening to burst with pride. However, his smile quickly faded, wondering what was going to happen now.

"Now," Stoick began, as if he'd read his son's mind, "You're gonna focus on getting better so we can get you out of here. We'll sort everything else out when we get home, but if it makes you feel better, Gobber is as we speak leading a party to destroy all of the traps."

Hiccup relaxed slightly. _One less thing to worry about, at least, _he thought.

"Speaking of which," Stoick continued brightly, "I better let him know you're awake." He rose out of the small armchair, grabbed his phone and walked out of the room. He paused in the doorway though, and turned to face Hiccup. "If you need anything, I'll be just outside. I'll only be a minute." Stoick said, stepping away from the door and closing it gently.

Hiccup took the time to examine his body, starting with his head. Aside from the odd bruise or bump, his body seemed to be in pretty good condition. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, before getting to the part he feared the most: his left leg. The leg felt oddly numb, which was definitely not reassuring.

Biting back his fear, he closed his eyes and pulled the blanket away. He slowly reopened his eyes, and really wished he hadn't. He was vaguely aware of shouting, but it wasn't until later that he realised it had been him. Hiccup gulped in air shakily. From the knee down, there wasâ€¦ nothing. _Oh gods, _ Hiccup prayed, _please, __**please**__ let this all be a nightmare_. But no matter how hard he prayed, it would not bring his leg back. Hiccup was so lost in shock, he hadn't noticed his father re-enter the room and wrap his thick arms around Hiccup's small frame, or that a doctor had appeared, looking very nervous. Eventually, when Hiccup's sobs had died down to the odd sniffle, he felt himself returning from the numbing world of shock. _How could it be gone?_ He just couldn't understand.

"Hiccup," The doctor began tentatively, "As you have now realised, I'm afraid we had to perform an emergency amputation of your lower left leg- a transtibial amputation, to be exact. The damage was just too high; there was no way we could have returned your leg to its previous state, and you'd be in pain for the rest of your life if it

was not amputated. However, I'm glad to say the operation was a complete success, despite your excessive blood loss. We've inserted a tube into the stump which will drain away any infection and should aid the healing process. I'll send a nurse along in a few hours to remove your drip now you're awake, but other than that, it's just a matter of you making the effort to get better. Your age is definitely a benefit- younger people always seem to bounce back faster from this type of operation."

Throughout the doctor's explanation, Hiccup found himself nodding emotionlessly. It was a lot to take in. He was still trying to accept the fact that his _freaking ankle was gone_, and all the medical talk was not helping. Taking several deep breaths, he tried to calm his nerves, as the doctor continued talking.

"I would expect that, with the aid of a prosthetic, you should be able to walk, run and do all the things you did before. It will take some time, and it won't be easy, but as long as you cooperate with the physiotherapists and are vigilant with the exercises they tell you to do, it's definitely possible. Once the stump has recovered, we'll get you an appointment for measurements for the prosthetic, and if all goes to plan, you should be able to start walking again, with practise, soon after that. Until then, however, you'll need to use a wheelchair to get around."

Finding his voice, Hiccup croaked, "How long until I can go home?" The idea of sitting around in a hospital room, no matter how nice it was, was not at all appealing to Hiccup. Who'd look after Toothless?

"Well," the doctor replied, "that depends highly on you. As long as you get plenty of rest, we should be able to discharge you in the next couple of days. After that, it'll be up to you to make sure you take your pain meds and antibiotics, and you'll have to come back in a few weeks to get the cast off and for a check-up. But hopefully, you should be able to get home soon."

"Umâ€¦" Hiccup began tentatively, not sure how to ask, "Erâ€¦ see, I have this wo- er dog, and I'd really like to see him. Is there any chance I could-"

"No." The doctor interrupted bluntly. "As much as I'm sure you're missing your pet, we can't risk infection by bringing him in here, especially when your immunity is so low after losing all that blood. I'm afraid you'll just have to wait a couple of days until you're well enough to go home."

Hiccup nodded, disappointed, but he could understand where the doctor was coming from. _Still, I wish Toothless was hereâ€¦_ His last memory of Toothless was of him snarling at the hunters, and despite his dad's reassurances of the canine's wellbeing, Hiccup needed to see the wolf for himself. He wouldn't be able to rest peacefully until he had. _Guess I'll just have to put up with it_, he thought glumly.

"Well, I need to continue with my rounds, but if you have any concerns, do not hesitate to call me or a nurse with the button on the bed." The doctor said, gesturing towards said button, before leaving the room.

The room fell into awkward silence after the doctor left, with both Hiccup and Stoick fidgeting uneasily. Now the initial relief and shock had worn off, neither really knew what to do.

"Hiccup-

"Dad-

"Er, you go first," Stoick blushed.

"Nope, it's fine, you go first" Hiccup said, also red faced.

Stoick took a deep breath. "Listen" about what I said before. I'm- I'm really sorry. I didn't mean it, I was just angry. I know that's no excuse but-

"You're right dad, it isn't an excuse. But I said a few things I regret too, so it's not like it was only you. It hurt a lot, and I can't just forget it, but I will try to forgive you." Hiccup interrupted. He'd had all these emotions inside of him: uncertainty, anger, sorrow, so it felt good to finally express himself. It felt like a bit of the weight of tension he'd been unwillingly carrying had lessened slightly.

Stoick beamed happily after getting over his initial surprise. That was a much better response than he was hoping for; Ok, so maybe Hiccup still seemed pretty angry, but at least he was trying to forgive him, and that's all that mattered to Stoick. "You know Hiccup I'm proud- to call you my son." Stoick said softly.

It was now Hiccup's turn to be surprised. "Thanks dad." He smiled shyly. It seemed like things were finally looking up.

After spending several boring days in the hospital, Hiccup's heart leapt with joy when the doctor told him he was finally well enough to go home.

The past days had been rather uneventful. A therapist had come to talk to him about the adjustments he'd need to make, and to show him how to get on and off of the wheelchair provided by the hospital. The therapist was a kind lady, with an expression which looked like she'd seen it all. She took things slowly and never rushed Hiccup, especially when he got upset over his situation, which happened frequently. He was ashamed of it, but he just couldn't stop it. He felt like he'd lost someone, which sounded stupid- _I've only lost a bit of my leg, it's not like anyone I love died_ He thought miserably, but according to his therapist, it was perfectly normal to feel like this. Still, that didn't really reassure him.

His father spent a lot of time with him, but was gone some days- he did have a town to run, after all. However, Hiccup couldn't shake the feeling that something was up, and he was slightly worried as to what.

So when he was told he could go home, he was understandably relieved. He'd finally be able to do something other than staring at the same old walls of his room. Even the games his father had brought him didn't really occupy him, his thoughts soon drifting off to something else, and when they didn't, the pain in his stump made it hard to

concentrate on anything.

As Hiccup sat waiting in his bed, Stoick began to pack away the few possessions Hiccup had into a bag. Once that was done, he left the room to go to the pharmacy and collect the medications that he'd been given strict instructions by the doctor to make sure Hiccup took. By the time he'd returned, he'd found Hiccup sitting in his wheelchair, ready to leave. Stoick smiled slightly. _Man, is that boy keen to get home, he thought fondly.

"Ready to get out of here?" He asked Hiccup, but he already knew the answer.

"Definitely." Hiccup grinned, as Stoick moved round to push the wheelchair out of the door. After turning around to check the room for belongings one last time, he moved out of the room with Hiccup, both relieved that they were finally going home for good. _If only he knew what I have plannedâ€¦|_ Stoick thought smugly to himself.

The ride home in the car took around twenty minutes, but it felt much longer than that to Hiccup. He just couldn't wait to see Toothless again, whom his dad had reassured him was waiting back at the house for them. But what he found definitely shocked him.

"Surprise!" A group of people shouted as Stoick wheeled Hiccup through the front door. Quickly taking in the 'Welcome home' sign and the crowd of people, he realised what was going on, and felt slightly nervous at the prospect of it. Since when did so many people care about him coming home? Even Snotlout was there, and seemed pretty happy to see Hiccup, although he could also have looked happy because he'd just been chatting up a pretty blonde girl. You never could tell with Snotlout. Before he could respond to the crowd though, he felt a great weight on his lap, and a wet tongue on his cheek. Grinning widely at the wolf standing on his lap, he wrapped his arms around his best friend. Toothless seemed so happy that Hiccup was worried his tail would fall off at the speeds it was wagging. The wolf whined joyfully as he covered all of Hiccup's face with slobbery kisses.

>"Aw, Toothless, you know that doesn't wash out!" He complained to the wolf, but really, he didn't care at all. He was just happy to see his best friend again. Lost in the moment, he'd completely forgotten about the assembled crowd- until they laughed at the scene in front of them, that is.<p>

Tightening his grip on the wolf, he whispered, "Thanks bud, you were amazing. Without you, I wouldn't be hereâ€¦|" Hiccup trailed off. He didn't need to finish the sentence though; Toothless understood perfectly, and replied by drawing the small boy closer to his body, resting his head over the boy's shoulder. He then lowered his head down to Hiccup's leg and whined sadly.

"It's ok bud, it's not your fault." Hiccup whispered reassuringly to the black wolf, unconsciously stroking his head softly to comfort him.

"Well," Gobber suddenly said from somewhere in the crowd, "I don't know about you, but I think it's high time to get celebrating. And by celebrating, I mean getting utterly dru-"

He was interrupted however, as music suddenly started playing loudly,

thanks to Stoick. Gobber looked slightly miffed at first, but soon got over it as he spotted the beer on a table in the corner of the room.

Hiccup slowly began to wheel himself into the crowd, Toothless glued to his side. A few months ago, this would have been his worst nightmare, but now, he actually kinda liked it. He smiled down at the wolf beside him. A lot had changed in the past few months, and he'd never want to go back to how things were before. What had once seemed like an impossible dream was now his reality, and he wouldn't want it any other way.

****A/N:** Well that's it guys, we've come to the end. When I started writing this story way back in July, I never thought it would get such a good response. I mean, 51 reviews, 68 followers and 56 favourites is much more than I ever dreamed of, and I want to thank every single one of you who took the time to read this story. It really does mean a lot to me. And so, because of how amazing you guys are, I'm now giving you a choice. Do you want a sequel? I have a few ideas, and it would probably be loosely based on the second movie, but I'm always open to suggestions :) I can't guarantee I will write the story, depending on school, but I most likely will- that's if you guys want a sequel of course. So please, for old time's sake, let me know your opinions through reviews ;) I'm sad this story is over, but also kinda happy- it's the first story I've ever actually finished, and that's all down to you lovely readers, so give yourselves a pat on the back ;) Thank you for staying with me I hope you enjoyed the final chapter, and hopefully I'll be back with a sequel :D

****ZambleTheZombie:** Ooh I love surprises, can't wait to see what it is :D thank you so much 3**

12. New Story!

****A/N:** I've finally got round to posting the first in a series of oneshots and drabbles called 'Oh, What a lovely Life', set in this story's AU ;D if you want to give it a read, check out my page ;)

End
file.